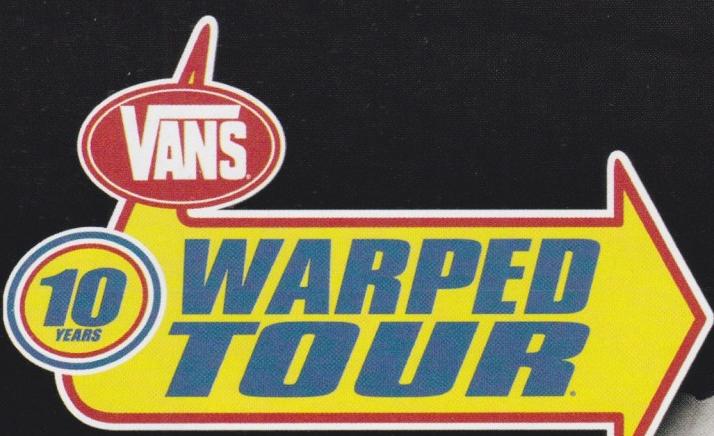


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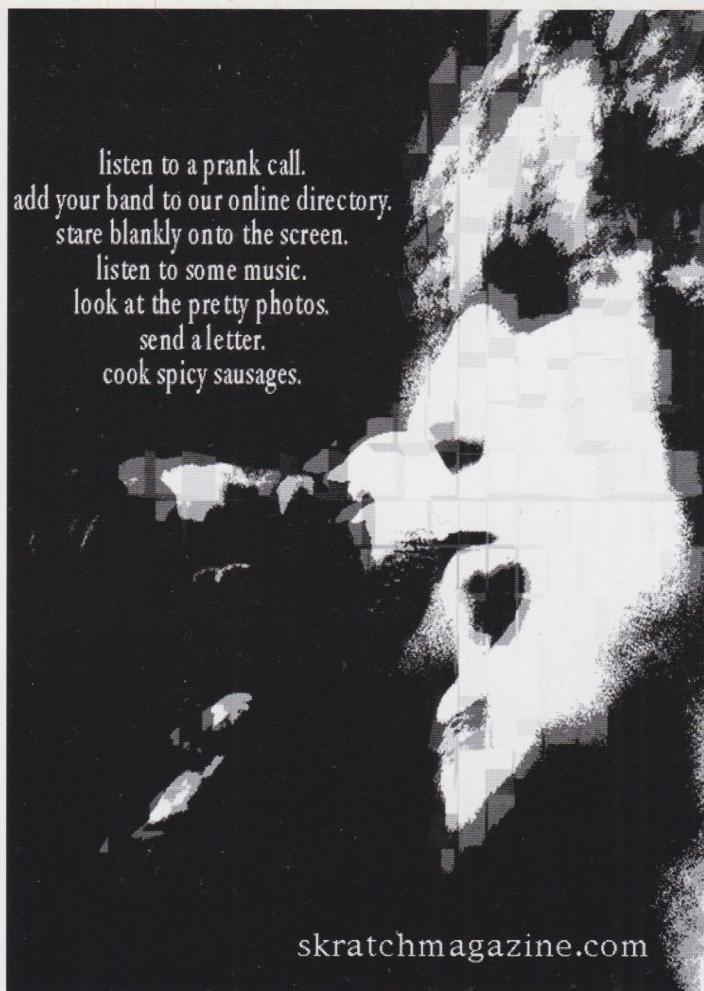
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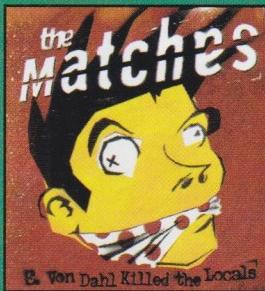
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listen to some music.
look at the pretty photos.
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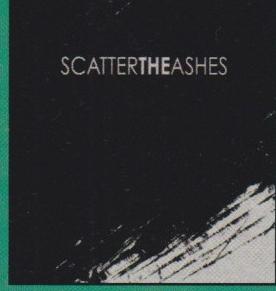
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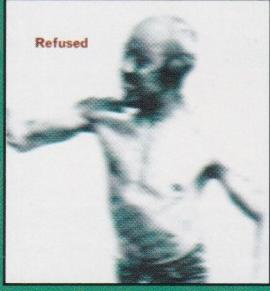
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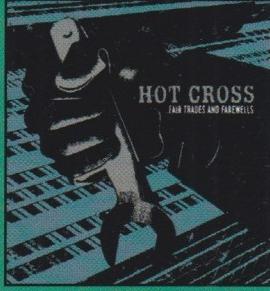
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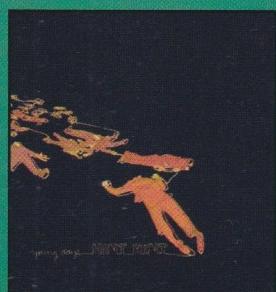
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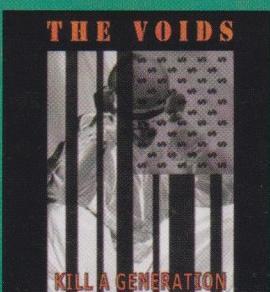
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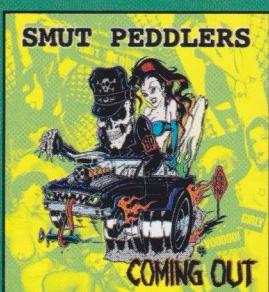
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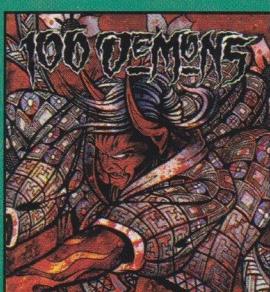
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 the deal
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the KRAYS
 CLUT 45
 INFECTED 
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taken.
 (last show)
 A Fall Farewell
 Radiation 4
 Bleeding Kansas
 Stricken

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 lurious guardian
 lord of the bong
 neon fields * ahelion
 liberty kills * casvian
 college years * anologia
 excuse 4 youth
 four of five

THUR JUN 10

Time Is The Enemy
 Savannah
 Snake Pitt
 A DYING MEMORY
 MOURNING REVOLUTION

SUN JUN 13

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 TRY HARDER

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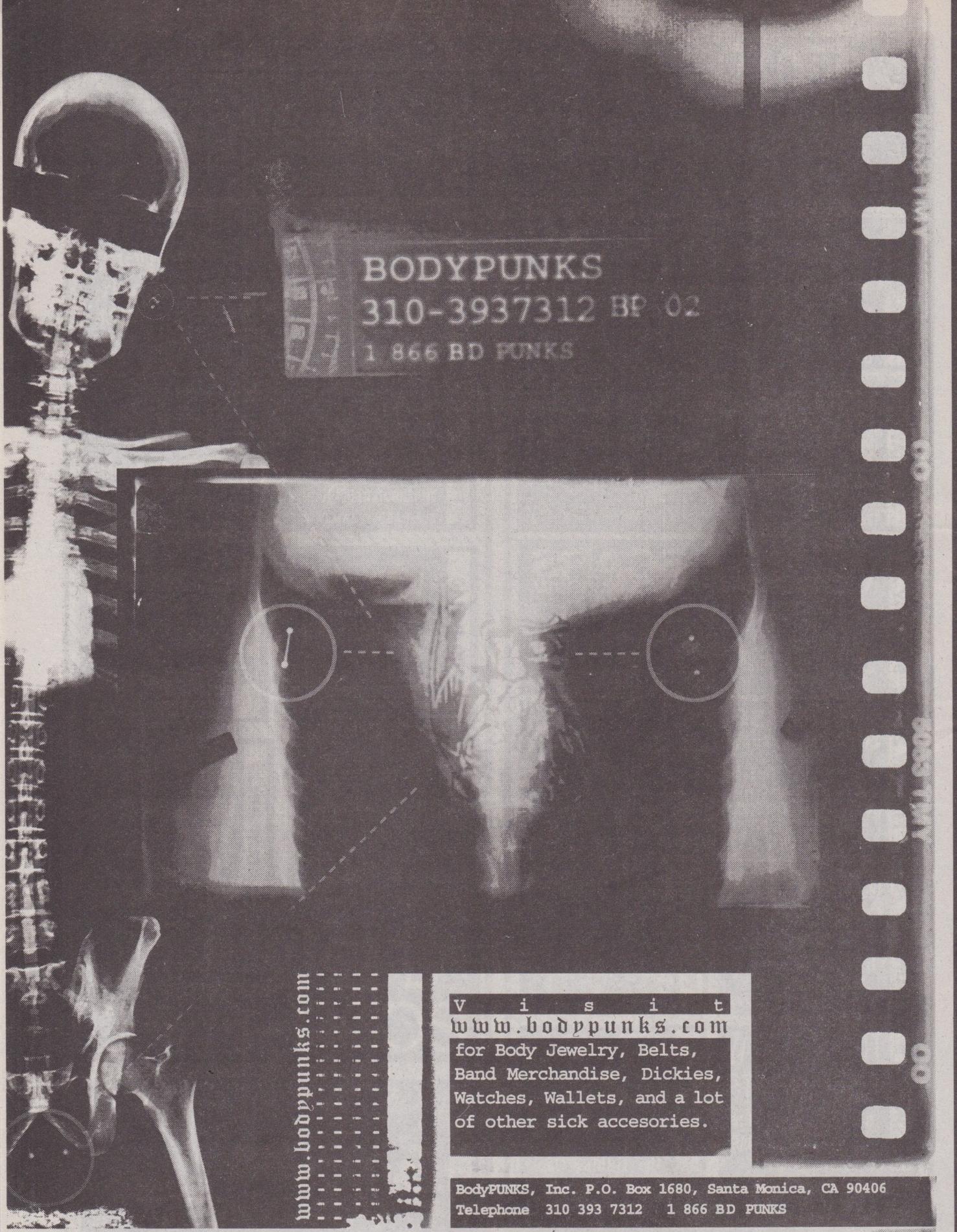
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9	10	11 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	12	13 Rimshot with DJ iron reggae	14 ZOLA MOON	15 Blue Vision
16 Open 10am Food All Day George Fryer combo	17	18 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	19	20	21 Phunkle with stepchild	22 Indonesian Meals
23	24	25 Two Dollar Tuesday \$2.00 draft beer \$2.00 Well drinks 2 Tacos \$2.00	26	27 Electro Lounge with Electronica Indie Rock w/ DJ 03	28 Rockabilly Show with Rory Justice & Special Guests	29 10th Anniversary for hard pack scooter club the pencils, new fidelity, d/strutters happy anniver- sary crush
30	31	J. KING NEPTUNE'S RULES!				

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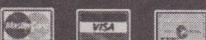


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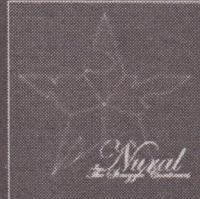
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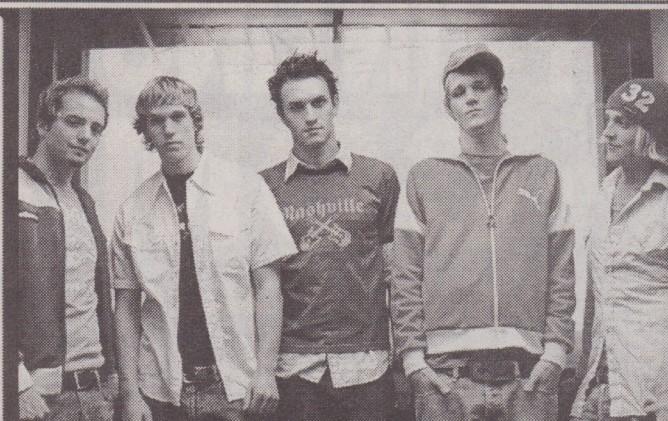
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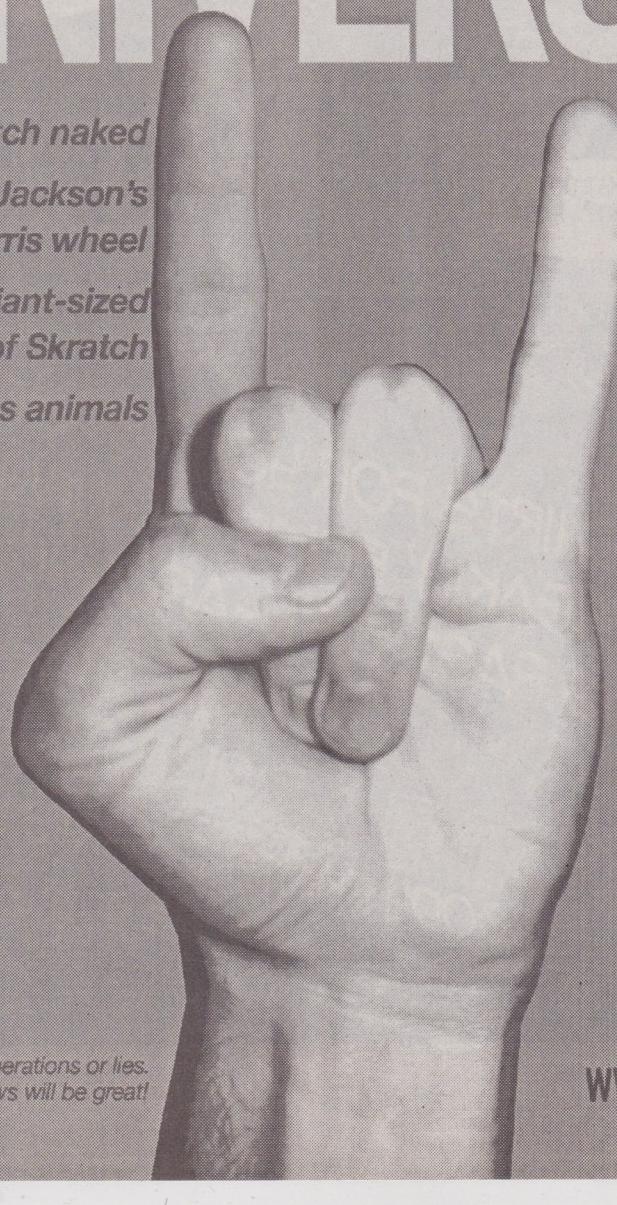
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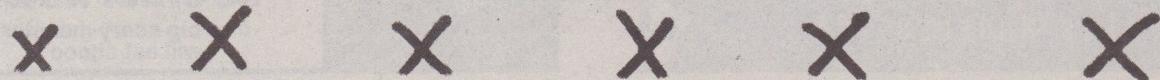
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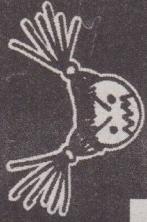
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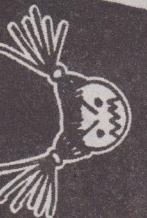
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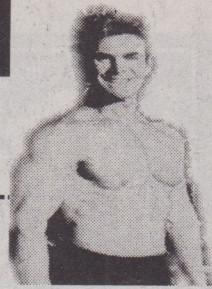
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I hope you enjoy every damn photo in this issue. Now, go away. Ha Ha Ha!

-scott, skratch
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The editor does not necessarily share the opinions expressed in this publication and assumes no responsibility for the advertisers within its pages. The editor will crap his pants come issue #100.

MORE EPLLOPS IN OUR MAILBOX



Hello,

In regards to the article written about the Grove show review written by Marcus Solomon. (Jan. 30)(With Strung Out, The Facton, Adolescents, and Off the Record) This article is written from an extremely biased position. I couldn't believe what I was reading. I was at the show, and Marcus Solomon either wasn't there, knows nothing about good music, or has an agenda other than reviewing a band's performance. I understand his oldschool punk roots and that he thinks change is bad, but

change is not for the better. As for the drummer missing the beat with his bass pedal (at least for awhile), this was an objective observation of fact corroborated by others in attendance. Even the best are not perfect. I respect anyone who can play a musical instrument, but that does not mean I always enjoy the result. Bear in mind that SKRATCH MAGAZINE is providing a forum you to voice your thoughts and you are now being heard. By the way, pop-punk is an oxymoron

skaters like Jim Greco, Ali boulala, or Dustin Dollin. com on get with the program. I'm not trying to hate but put some stuff people care about.

-Greg G.

Hello Greggy poops,
Cuz we're jerk offs and that's what jerk offs do.

Later dude,
Scott, Skratch

Hey skratch,
I just have one question for you why are you so mean to people who write to you? I think it's hilarious and you should keep doing it but it's still king of mean

-alklinetrio18

Hey alkaline trio fan guy,
Cuz we're jerk offs. It's fun too!

Puh-puh-puh-peace!
Scott, Skratch

Hey!
First of all, I'd like to congratulate you guys on the magazine...it's great. It's getting pretty big in the central coast area. Anyways, I was just wondering if you guys could maybe do more interviews and reviews with/on hardcore bands..ya know instead of like punk rock and indie/emo.. I don't mean to sound like some whiney little girl, but it's just a request. Okay I'm done..take it easy.

-XKILLYOURENEMIESX

Dear Sirs,
I like to learn more about your magazines but unfortunately there is no credit card in our city for subscribing and purchase. I seriously require some sample copies of your magazines.

I will be very grateful if you send me three sample copies of your magazines to:

My Address:.....Keshavarz, Qom, Iran

Ali V.

Oh Come on Ali. Oh, I swear AHHHHLee..Come on...Uh...no.

singing in the shower,
-scott, skratch

GOT SOMETHING

TO SAY?

Email us a letter, we'll try to be nice.
Write it to: scott@skratchmagazine.com
Do it, do it now.

he went as far as saying that the 2nd top punk drummer can't keep beat. And that the faction played a good show. The musicianship of The Faction and even the Adolescents was fairly poor, and mistakes were audible. Stung out played an amazing show, I forced my way closer just to watch Jordan Burns do his thing. He laid it down. Anyway, my point is, if you're going to write an article about the fake new pop-punk scene, and how its just pretty boys with big trucks, and rich kids whose parents buy them the nicest guitar at fountain valley guitar center, fine. Write it. It will be well heard and probably appreciated. But don't go writing a review of a show, and let your bitterness overrun your good judgement and fairness. I think Strung out and Off the Record got an unfair rap.. Marcus should be using his privilege to be fair and honest, not to hold down bands that he doesn't like.

signed,
Difference of Opinion

-Difference of Opinion

Marcus replies:

I have received both positive and negative feedback in regard to this particular article. I knew that fans of Off the Record and Strung Out would take offence, but I chose to maintain my writer's integrity by giving my personal, honest assessment. I openly admit my subjective tastes dictate the nature of my writings. Readers should bear in mind that all reviews are merely opinions, and should always be read with a healthy dose of critical doubt. Music is like food, what I find nourishing may cause an allergic reaction in others. I have no problem with change in general. However, if style eclipses substance, then that

Hey!
Ever think about making SKRATCH Mag. Sent to peoples homes? What about a tv show? Well my friends and I have our own production Duck Tape Ind. Were some pretty f-ed up 13 year olds wanting to make some money. We are huge fans of your magazines and sometimes we skate all the way to Orange to get your magazine. We live in Santa Ana. Not a popular town but a lot of s*#t goes down here. There's a lot of hot bands, none of that bull shit pop rock crap. Real stuff like D.I. So far we make skate movies. We are thinking about a band too. I write songs while my friend plays guitar and we're lookin for bass and drums. We know the hottest places to skate and we're to find new bands. You can give me a call at 714-####.####. And my name is Teresa. Later.

Teresa,
You're one of them- you know the types that wanna do everything. Passion is good. Why don't you try one thing and get some medication for your A.D.D. It's going to be okay kid.. dream a little dream. One step at a time, Teresa. The name Duck tape Industries is pretty groovy actually.

Good luck with your endeavors--of course, you likely don't know what that means. Keep skating and check out Duane Peters sometimes for some good old-schoolin skate trix.

Cheers,
Scott, Skratch

Why do you jerk offs do something with REAL punk like the addicts, misfits, channel 3, crass, or bands like that. Do something useful with this "Magazine". Get some real

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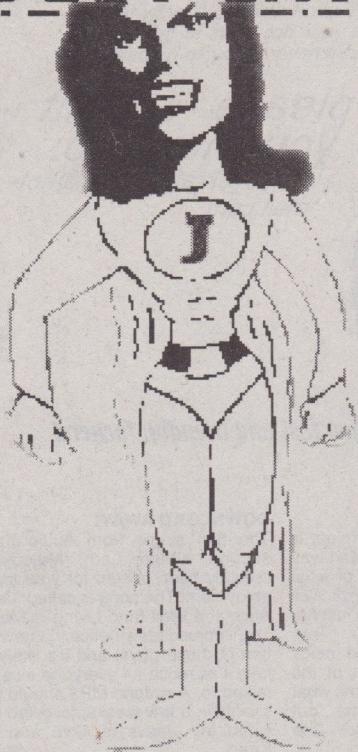
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JUST SAY JULIE



DEAD OLD PEEPS

by Julie Fredericksen

We discovered a news article: an 88-year-old man was really sick and jumped out of a small airplane and landed on some stranger's balcony and died and stuff. Can you imagine being the owner of that balcony? You're eating dinner, and you hear this loud thud.

"Hey, Marge, what was that?"

"Some kinda big bird or something. Pass me some more Funyuns." Well, I have to admire the grand gesture of the poor old guy. I like the jumping out of plane part, and I hope he intended to land in the ocean or something. I probably would have tried to navigate the plane over Disneyland and be forever known as the guy who jumped out of the plane and died on top of the Matterhorn or landed in a spinning teacup. Maybe that's even better.

The worst thing about some old people is they smell like pee. But today I was talking to a co-worker of mine (who is the same age as me), and she smelled like pee. I guess she figured that old people have all the fun. I thought of another worst thing: how some oldsters keep insisting that the way things USED TO BE were so much better. I just don't think that's true. Do you remember being 10 or 12 years old and thinking, Well, life doesn't get any better than THIS. Our reality can always be improved upon, and life is pretty good right now. I belong to a service club, and there's this one old lady who always has to make some cranky announcement about how things were and how all the new, young people in the club are just ruining everything and some other things that seem to have her Depends in a knot. But I have a feeling she's always been like that. I think growing old just magnifies the personality you already

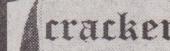
had. So, if you're a whiny, negative bore now, you'll be a cranky old lady and no one will want to talk to you. If you're a cool person now, you'll turn into a cool geezer. Cool geezers are the best. They're observant and frank and tell good, not-boring stories. I think the key is not hanging around too many other geezers. You know how friends start talking like each other? Rappers sound like each other, teenage girls, cops, baseball players why would old people be any different? If we spent a week at a convalescent home, we'd start talking about our arthritis, too, and how, in the old days green beans tasted better.

I want to know when old people start to dress like old people. In his elderly years, my grandpa always wore a plaid flannel shirt, blue, Dickies-type pants, and a trucker hat (years before Ashton Kutcher ordered his first trucker hat from Urban Outfitters). But I'm not sure when Gramps adopted that as his "twilight of his years" uniform. I see little old ladies, in their polyester pants and cardigans and wonder at what precise point that happened. Did they get some sort of memo, or while at the mall did they suddenly make a sharp right into JC Penney and ask where the cardigans are? The old-lady hair follows, cut very short and permed. Fight the power, gals. Leave that hair long and white. It worked for several important wizards in THE LORD OF THE RINGS. Old people stop wearing T-shirts that say things, except for "WORLD'S GREATEST GRANDMA," etc. I think they should do just the opposite. They should wear shirts that express their frustrations with aging. "I WET MY PANTS WHEN I SNEEZE," for instance. "I CAN'T OPEN GODDAMN BOTTLES OF ASPIRIN BY MYSELF." "EVERYTHING TASTES LIKE SAWDUST." "I'M ONE FALL AWAY FROM A SHATTERED HIPBONE." Feel-good shirts. They could high-five each other in grocery stores or wink at each other in solidarity.

I like picturing all the tattooed people right now as future old people some rapper at age 85 being fed cereal,

“ If we spent a week at a convalescent home, we'd start talking about our arthritis, too, and how, in the old days green beans tasted better. **”**

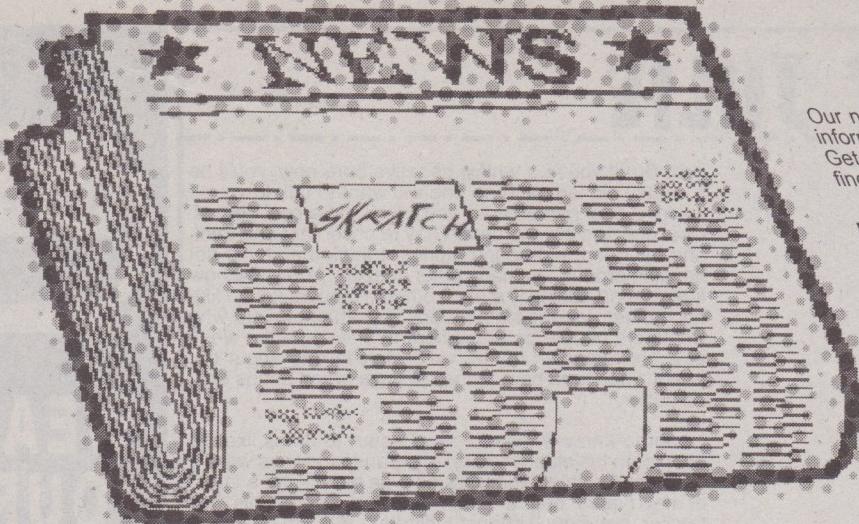
"THUG LIFE" still inked across his flabby old stomach. Or all the girls getting the lower-back tattoos now someday reaching down to adjust their wheelchair and their stretch pants reveals their wrinkled, faded dragonfly tattoo. In Hollywood, they try to fight off aging with a lot of hair dye. Think of how Ozzy would look if he didn't dye his hair: like a confused, shuffling old man. Or if Mick Jagger had white hair: like some skinny old dude who needs to be redirected to the shuffleboard area. If Michael Jackson's real hair was on parade, ew, he'd be a gray-haired, even creepier freak. David Letterman is starting to look like an old man. Will he be a cranky old man or someone you want to sit with during craft hour? I'm guessing cranky, but funny. He'd get out a few zingers before his afternoon nap. Dolly Parton is another future old person I'd try to get a seat next to during bingo. She'd be sassy. And she'll never have old lady hair.



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VALEDICTORIANS OF ROCK

Graduation has come and gone for the boys of The F-Ups, and they are taking the next big step in their lives! July 13th marks the release date of the self-titled debut album on Capitol Records. And talk about summer plans, while most kids are off working fast food, and going camping...these guys are hitting up the stage on the Vans Warped Tour, with punk legends like Bad Religion, NOFX, and The Vandals. If you get a chance to escape the hallows of your summer job, why not check out these guys, and wish you were them!

BEST FRIENDS, OR WORST...?

Worst Enemy...no I'm not talking about that bitchy girl in your calculus class, I'm talking about the hot new EP from Go Betty Go! This five-track album is full of pop-punk goodness. Not sure if you want to buy the album? Why not check out Go Betty Go on the first leg of the Vans Warped Tour before you commit to the CD, but believe us...you'll be buying it anyways!

WWW...

What's your homepage? Yahoo? Google? Bigbits.com? Well if it's not www.bandvideos.tk you need to change it! Think you've seen it all from your favorite bands like RxBandits, Finch, and The Chain Reaction? Well we bet you haven't. There is all kinds of unbelievable footage from these and many other bands that you don't want to miss! So get your ass over to www.bandvideos.tk maybe it will load faster than your porn!

I'LL PENCIL YOU IN

The boys of The Higher have got to have palm pilots with everything they do, how else could they keep it all straight?! With mini tours, new videos, and a debut EP, how do they find time to sleep? Well sleep is overrated anyways, and they will be able to catch up on it while on the road with Silverstein, Alexisonfire and Emery. If you wanted to catch the new video, you should check out www.fiddlerrecords.com! Why not check out one of their shows and grab the new EP!?

HOT HOT HOT

You might want to carry around a fire extinguisher in July, because that month will be on fire! Taking Back Sunday will be releasing their debut album off Victory Records and word on the street is it will be insanely aw-

some! Expect to hear something that is very much so Taking Back Sunday style, but with a little bit more mature attitude, and more rock and roll. Now honestly, can you beat that?! Also, in June, the guys are taking off across the big blue, to do a UK tour, after returning, They will finish up in August with some awesome shows on the Vans Warped Tour! You won't want to miss any of this so make sure to keep up to date on the guys!

SPRING FLING? HARDLY!

Spring is upon us. Time to peel off the winter coats and get ready for tours, parties, cookouts and outdoor activities. Girls get your tube tops and daisy dukes out and boys get the chucks ready to rock! Why not give "tailgating" a new meaning and start doing it before shows, god knows there will be enough this summer to start a trend! With bands like Death Angel, Disbelief, and Edgy all hitting the road and rocking out! Check out www.nuclearblast.com for the low down!

SUPER MARIO BROTHERS ROCK

Before the X-Box, and before game cube, there was the original Nintendo! Now common, everyone had one, at least all the cool kids did! And everyone can hum all the theme songs to every game (Super Mario Brothers anyone?) Well the guys from The Advantage have taken it one step farther. Since 1998, the group, which has undergone many member changes, has been playing Nintendo songs and has finally come out with their self-titled album. With over 1000 demos floating around, the guys have made a vow to cover every Nintendo song by the time each member is dead. Talk about goals in life...

NOT AGAIN

In an over saturated post punk and rock and roll scene in New York City, FRESH KILLS take a turn for a more heavy and artsy song structure. With bands like Birthday Party, Bauhaus, Drive Like Jehu, and Nation of Ulysses as influences, Fresh Kill stands out from the crowd. With members who have done time in bands of all genres of underground sounds, they get a final product like nothing else. This is not something you'll want to miss! Make sure to check em' out!

JUST A TASTE PLEASE

Watch out this July as Odd Project is releasing their debut album! Can't wait that long to get a sneak taste of what you're in for with the new album? Well you don't have to as they have just finished filming the video for "Tear Stained Lies". Word is the video rocks, but the album will blow it out of the water! Good videos, good albums what more could you want? Check out www.indianolareds.com for the goods!

DRUMMERS NEEDED....AGAIN

As seems to be the problem with all the best bands these days, Backstabbers Incorporated are again undergoing drummer issues. If you're interested in being in a band that will tour frequently and plays hardcore (as opposed to technical metal core) Then get off your ass and get in contact with the band. And honestly who wouldn't want to drive around in a van with a bunch of other dudes? If you're interested, and I know you are drop a line to backstabbersinc@hotmail.com for more information.

CANDY AND METAL?

Lollipop is proud to be a sponsor of this year's New England Metal and Hardcore festival. With 62 bands playing, some one was awesome and felt it'd be cool to build a resource page where each band playing gets a band page with all their CDs, links to reviews or features that were done for the band over the years, a bio, photo, and links to the band and label websites so fans can listen to mp3s, order stuff, that kinda thing. Doesn't that rock?! Damn straight it does, so check it out! <http://www.lollipop.com/metalfest/> for all the details and goodies!

NOT EVEN SENIOR CITIZENS

What do you get for lasting two years on the Billboard New Artist Chart? RETIRED! Taking Back Sunday now joins a very exclusive club of artists who, after bubbling under on the New Artist Chart for two years, are moved to the Top Catalog chart, where it can compete against Poison's Greatest Hits and various Yanni albums. Ah, the price of success. It must be rough. The guys are far from being over though so make sure to keep up to date with them!

DOWNLOAD AWAY!

The first single from Audio Karate's second album Lady Melody, has recently been posted for your listening enjoyment! The song is called "Jesus is Alive and Well (and Living in Mexico)." You'll immediately notice the new direction of these guys, and it's likely you'll love it as much as everyone else we've talked to. A second MP3 should be out shortly in a few weeks, followed by the video for "Jesus is Alive and Well". Keep checking www.kungfurecords.com for updates

KABOOM!

Tsunami Bomb is thrashing out a new disc on July 13th! The release of The Definitive Act will be celebrated at 3 separate shows that will most definitely sell out so get your tickets fast! Jul 10 - San Francisco, CA (Slim's), Jul 16 - Los Angeles, CA (Troubadour), Jul 17 - Los Angeles, CA (Troubadour).

SOUNDS OF THE BEACH...

Sinai Beach is heading out on a mini tour to help them gain stamina before they hit the studio! A new album is expected to be released by November with new sounds to rip your ears apart in awe. Their dates with Throwdown and Precious Blood are as follows... May 16 - San Antonio, TX @ Sin 13 May 17 - Dallas, TX @ Gypsy Tea Room May 20 - Phoenix, AZ @ The Mason Jar May 21 - Corona, CA @ Showcase Theatre May 22 - Fresno, CA @ Big Game Studios May 23 - San Francisco @ The Pound

SADISTIC?

Watch Them Die has taken off on a nation wide tour this May with fellow metallers GWAR. The tour will be wrapped up in June but not before it hits the east coast. Their debut self-titled disc is sure to appeal to any fans of metal ranging from Hatebreed to Goatwhore and beyond! Find out more info at www.watchthemdie.com

TOO DRUNK TO REMEMBER NEW YEAR'S EVE?

235 minutes of New Year's Eve have just been released on DVD! No, they weren't memories of your cousin on a toilet. The DVD is the legendary Steve Kimock Band live from the Gothic Theatre. And if 10 full-length songs aren't enough for you to buy the CD, there are backstage interviews as well! Catch the DVD out now in special retail

stores or online at www.kimock.com.

DOUBLE THE X-CHROMOSOME

Female-fronted French anarchists Robotnica are here touring the states! They're also moments away from dropping out their debut full length on Bloodlink Records entitled "Spectre en Vue." Watch out early summer for their due date! More at www.Robotnica.org

TEAMING UP

Boca Raton based Undecided Records and Victory Records in North America will now exclusively distribute Films. Good news for North America! The initial summer releases include offerings by Every Time I Die, The Big Screen, Further Seems Forever, Shindig, Things in Herds, and Burn the Mountain Down, along with the re-issue of Poison The Well's debut full length!

STEPPING UP

Moneen is stepping up in the music business and headlining their first National tour! The tour kicked off April 17th and will continue on to over 30 major cities across the U.S. This past year Moneen has ripped up the stage opening for bands such as Brand New, Taking Back Sunday and Alkaline Trio. Now the Canadian bred band is hitting it off solo, and is sure to do their home, Vagrant Records, justice.

GOOD TO BE HOME?

Darkest Hour is back from their extensive European tour, and on the road in the U.S. with Thrice and Poison The Well!!! Tour dates can be found at either www.victoryrecords.com/darkesthour.html or www.darkesthour.com. The Anaheim show is a must for Southern California fans, as the band will be filming a video for "The Sadist Nation" during their performance at Chain Reaction

STOMP OF THE WELCOME MAT

Japanese-psych-rockers Acid Mothers Temple have been added to the Solid PR roster in support of their upcoming album "Mantra of Love" on Alien8 Recordings, as well as a full US tour... 6/1 – Seattle, WA @ Crocodile Cafe 6/2 – Portland, OR @ Berbati's Pub 6/4 – San Francisco, CA @ Bottom of the Hill 6/7 – LA, CA @ The Knitting Factory 6/8 – San Diego, CA @ The Casbah 6/13 – Houston, TX @ Mary Jane's 6/14 – New Orleans, LA @ Mermaid Lounge 6/18 – Philadelphia, PA @ The First Unitarian Church 6/19 – Brooklyn, NY @ Southpaw

MIDTOWN GOES UPTOWN?

June 29 Midtown's, new release "Forget What You Know" on Columbia records hits the streets. They just inked the deal with Columbia records very recently.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT NOTHIN'

The Conversation's Highly Anticipated New CD Release Blue Out June 1st St. Paul, MN April 13, 2004 – Road warriors The Conversation are set for a 2nd CD release June 1, 2004. It will be available regionally in Southern California at Tower Records and Wherehouse outlets and in Texas at all Tower locations, as well as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, CD Baby and Interpunk on the web. The Conversation and friends will hold an official release party in Minneapolis in Early June.

SUFFOCATION COMPLETE WORK ON NEW VIDEO

Relapse Records recording artists SUFFOCATION have completed work on the first music video from their forthcoming new album, Souls to Deny.

The video, for the song "Surgery of Impalement", was filmed at Philadelphia's Eastern State Penitentiary and features the band (vocalist Frank Mullen, drummer Mike

Smith, guitarists Terrance Hobbs and Guy Marchais and bassist Derek Boyer) performing live in various locations in and around the prison's locale. Still images from the video, which is expected to make its world premier in the immediate future, can be viewed at this location: <http://www.relapse.com/preview/suffocationvideo.jpg>.

Eastern State Penitentiary, which no longer houses inmates and is now a historical site, was built in 1829. Eastern State is known previously for having held notorious gangster Al Capone, and was featured in the 1995 motion picture Twelve Monkeys.

RECOVERY TO SHOW ADDICTION
cover will be playing loads of May shows in the big state of Texas with The Rocket Summer and At All Cost. Then, they head to the United Kingdom in June with Taking Back Sunday and The Hurt Process. Not too shabby!

SILENCE IS A VIRTUE

Equal Vision Records, Silent Drive's debut full-length album, entitled Love Is Worth It, is available in stores now! Reviews of the album have been extremely positive with people saying things like "The musical fluctuation is beyond comparison" (killyourscene.net), and "Silent Drive is a real lesson in diversity" (blogcritics.org).

BYO TIME

The Briefs are currently on a nationwide tour with Canada's Real McKenzies. Their new album Sex Objects will be in stores June 29 which will feature some hits like Orange Alert, Shoplifting At Macy's, and Destroy The U.S.A.

Throw Rag are out on some West Coast Dates with the grandfathers of punk, THE CIRCLE JERKS currently.

DOUGHMAIN UPDATE

It's official. Blus Root is currently writing a song for the motion picture Anacondas, the sequel to Anaconda. Josh-Doughmain records owner have a new addition to his family and her name is Cienna (4.26.04 - 7lbs. 4oz), welcome to the world...Love You. Don't forget to check out the Doughmain Records store.

GO TO JAPAN

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LACUNA COIL HOTIE

Thanks to the readers of Metal Edge, who voted Cristina Scabbia "Female Performer of the Year" and Lacuna Coil "Next Big Thing" in the magazine's June issue. The group's tour with P.O.D. kicks off in Denver on May 1.....

READING FOR LONG HAIRS

Dream Evil is thrilled to announce that The Book of Heavy Metal will be released July 13th in the U.S. through Century Media Records. Dream Evil features the astounding voice of Niklas Isfeldt, metal's premier producer Fredrik Nordström (HammerFall, In Flames, Arch Enemy) on guitar, and Greek guitar hero Gus G. (Mystic Prophecy, Nightrage) on lead/rhythm guitar. Grounding the band in rhythmic melody is bassist Peter Stålfors and drummer-extraordinaire Snowy Shaw (ex-King Diamond/Mercyful Fate, Notre Dame).

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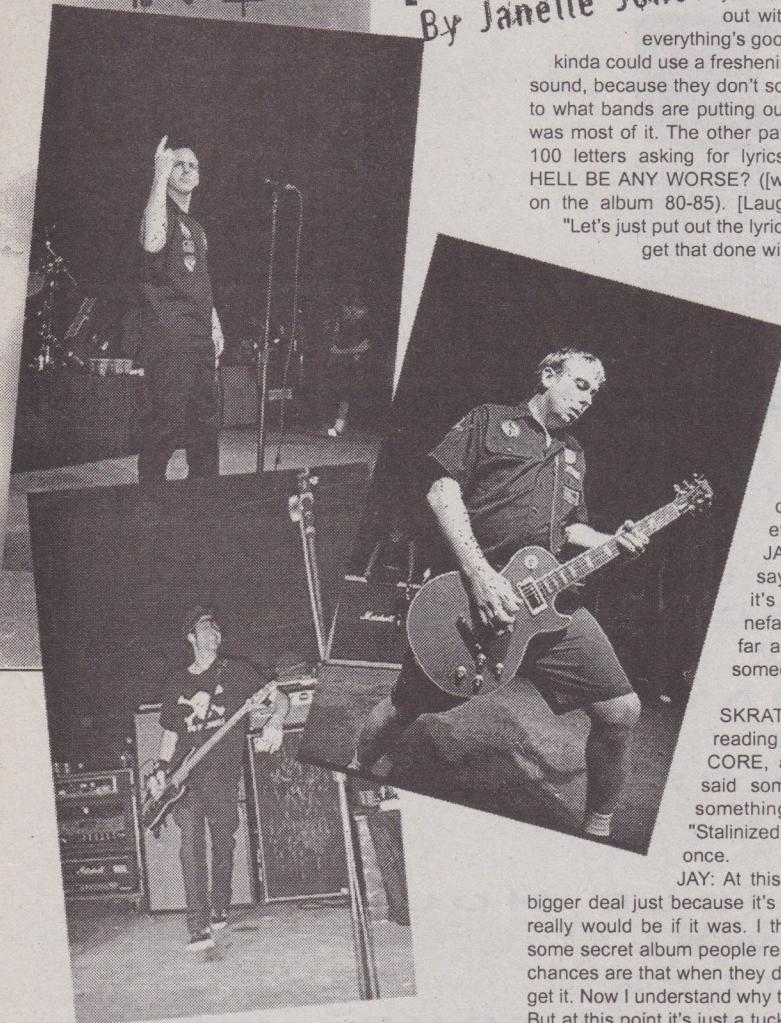
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BAD RELIGION

By Janelle Jones



BAD RELIGION
By Janelle Jones
Photos By Scott Wulfestieg

Longest-running L.A. punk act Bad Religion (now consisting of vocalist Greg Graffin; bassist Jay Bentley; guitarists Greg Hetson, Brett Gurewitz, and Brian Baker; and drummer Brooks Wackerman) have no intention of slowing down by the look of things. With a new album on the horizon and reissues of much of their classic early material, there's no question these stalwarts will keep creating their now-signature hardcore punk for the thinking man/woman for generations to come.

SKRATCH: You guys just put out all those reissues of your early material. Why now?

JAY: Well, the technology available to us when we made those records when we changed from analog to digital 'cause all those records came out on vinyl, and then they were released on CD later the technology we could afford wasn't that great. I

think we were doing like 16-bit digital conversion, and now 96-bit is the norm, and it sounds a lot better. And it just seems like we were...If you go and listen to one of our records, it's not that they're not good, but they were quiet. The CDs didn't quite have the same punch that CDs today have. And it was something we were talking about anyways, because obviously technology is just leaps and bounds over what it was in 1988, so we just thought, We're coming out with a new record and everything's good, and these records

kinda could use a freshening up just in terms of sound, because they don't sonically stand up well to what bands are putting out today on CD. That was most of it. The other part was that 99 out of 100 letters asking for lyrics for HOW COULD HELL BE ANY WORSE? ([which] was [included] on the album 80-85). [Laughs] So we figured,

"Let's just put out the lyric sheet of that album, get that done with."

SKRATCH: And I know you didn't play on it, but there's still no INTO THE UNKNOWN
JAY: Not yet.

SKRATCH: And you don't think there's ever gonna be?

JAY: [...] I shouldn't say never. Obviously, it's available through nefarious means; but as far as the future, maybe someday. I don't know.

SKRATCH: I remember reading AMERICAN HARDCORE, and Brett and Greg said some stuff. Brett said something about it being "Stalinized." I mean, I heard it once.

JAY: At this time, it might be a bigger deal just because it's not available than it really would be if it was. I think it's because it's some secret album people really wanna hear. But chances are that when they do, they're like, "Oh, I get it. Now I understand why they didn't put it out." But at this point it's just a tucked-away work of art from the band at a point in its career where things were changing.

SKRATCH: It kinda reminds me of BENEATH THE SHADOWS-TSOL when they went in a different.

JAY: It's very funny that those two albums came out at exactly the same time, and I can verify factually the bands never spoke to each other about, "Hey, wouldn't it be a good time to put out a synthesizer album?" So it just goes to show that the climate at that time was, "Well, what can we do to kinda get a" [In] L.A., it seemed every band was sounding the same-not very different than today. [Laughs] And I think everyone's desire was to be different, 'cause that's what it was in the beginning. Everybody had their own thing, whatever that was.

SKRATCH: You're just saying people sounded different, and then at one point everyone was playing kinda [similar]?

JAY: Well, I think when I first started going to shows, honestly, there was about 15 or 16 bands you could go and see, other than like a touring act

from the U.K. or someone from the East Coast. And by 1983 in L.A. there was probably 1000 bands-and of those 1000, 900 of them sounded exactly the same. You just kinda started thinking, "What happened?" Like, no one is in it for originality anymore-it's just volume, speed, and swearing, which [...] gets tiring after a while.

SKRATCH: You've released so many records. It may be hard, but is there possibly one you could choose that epitomizes Bad Religion?

JAY: Hmm... No. I think, for me, if I were to try to make one record, I would have to take certain songs off all the records and put it together as a collection and say, "This is what I think Bad Religion is at its best"-so it wouldn't be just one record. I look at records more like pictures than music. I know that's hard, but because I'm in the band I don't really hear the music the same way someone else would. I hear the music and it conjures up images of what we were doing at the time-in that sense, they're all like home movies. [Laughs] I couldn't choose one over the other. Some of them were harder to make than the others, and some of them were during more difficult times. But I don't think I could find just one album in particular that would sum up the career of this band.

SKRATCH: Can you talk about the new record? Is there anything you think people should know about it?

JAY: Other than it's the best record we ever made?

SKRATCH: [Laughs] That's good! I mean, so it's called THE EMPIRE STRIKES FIRST. [...] A majority of the songs deal with current affairs.

JAY: Yeah, I think that's kind of all we ever dealt with. And to be honest with you, people have asked us to be very specific about what we're talking about, and that's something we've never done. We've never sat down and pointed. I mean, I shouldn't say we never have, 'but' rarely have we actually pointed out a specific individual and said, "You, you're the culprit." Our focus has always been on what it's like to be a person on this planet, as a human being with human emotions and just like everybody else, why do we do the things we do. [...] Everything we do deals with current affairs. Whether it's the War on Terror or the war in the Middle East, it's something we've always dealt with, because people are inherently mean to each other, so it's a fairly easy subject to delve into and stay relevant, because it never stops.

SKRATCH: Are there any songs that particularly stand out for you?

JAY: Yeah, I like "All There Is". I don't know why. It's just, like, such a different kind of song. It just works for me. But in all honesty, I was talking to Brett the other day about the record. There's not one song I ever get the urge to push the forward button. [Laughs] I can listen to it front to back, and then just hit the repeat button, and it's like, All right. I'm sweeping or something, it plays like 100 times, and I'm like, "Oh, this is cool! I listened to it again!" So, I think the album as a whole came out really well, and it plays very well from front to back, and that's something that isn't very easy to do. And usually you just kinda luck into things like that. I shouldn't say you just luck into it, 'cause I know Brett worked on it really hard. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: You say it's the best record you've ever released. Why do you say that?

JAY: [Laughingly] Well, having put out a few really crappy records in the past and knowing it and thinking, "No," you know what? For right now, in 2004, this is the best record we've ever done. And I know people will disagree, and they'll have their own personal favorite, but I'm pretty sure that my opinion is probably pretty heavily weighted on the

side of knowing more than everybody else about what we do. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: With Brett leaving and then coming back with THE PROCESS OF BELIEF, you guys definitely came back to where you'd been; that signature sound returned. What did Brett bring back to the band?

JAY: Well, first of all he brought back his songwriting. That was something that from the beginning of this band: we've always had two songwriters-Brett and Greg-and I think they've always complemented each other very well. Between the two of them, there was a healthy competition, [where] one would write a song and go, "Listen to this song. It's the best thing I've ever written," and the other would go back and write three more songs and go, "Oh yeah? Here's my three songs," so we all benefited from these guys having a tennis match of songwriting. And when Brett left, I think Greg did a great job with THE GRAY RACE. I think Brian stepped in and really helped out with some musical ideas that we never ventured into because Brian had a different style than anyone we'd ever played with; but after that, I think Greg writing on his own just kinda felt it wasn't as easy as it was with Brett in the band and that it was a lot more fun having him there to challenge him. So when Brett came back for THE PROCESS, there was a period of time-it wasn't very long, it was maybe six or eight weeks-where you could see the spark between those two start all over again. And the writing just became unbelievably prolific in a three- or four-month period, to the point where we just [went,] "Okay, we have enough material for a really good record." And as we were making it, the songs just kept growing and becoming what they were. And [we didn't have] the pressure of everybody breathing over your neck and going back

onto Epitaph and being in the studio with Brett, and nobody cared what we were doing. It was a perfect environment for us, because that's when we work the best. If someone says, "Hey, you have to do this. You're on a schedule," [] we rebel. [Laughs] We don't wanna be on a schedule. So I think just coming back to Epitaph and [] having Brett writing and being in the band just kind of brought everything back in balance.

SKRATCH: So do you think it was a mistake going on a major label, or you did you need that?

JAY: No, absolutely not. I could just sum it up like this: when we first started rehearsing again, the very first time we ever stepped into a rehearsal room with Brett back in the band and all of us were there, Brett and I were sitting there, and I just turned to him and said, "If all this hadn't happened, we wouldn't be sitting here right now." And we both kind of laughed and agreed. It had to happen. This is just the way things are, the way things had to happen; and going onto another label it didn't matter what label it was at the time, the feeling was that the band and [Epitaph] were both growing exponentially and probably smothering each other, and we had to get out from underneath each other's shadows. We just didn't know where to go. How do you leave your own label and go somewhere else? We made a choice not based on a label, but based on a person; but eventually we learned that in the high-end label world, the turnover rate for employees is about every three months, so we learned pretty quickly that people who we were relying on to be our point people at that label, they were just gone. It wasn't that bad. I

mean, we learned a lot and we had a...well, I learned a lot and I had a growing experience being on a label that was different than Epitaph, 'cause Epitaph was the only thing I'd ever known. Going somewhere else and learning how other people do things is how you learn.

SKRATCH: To what do you attribute BR's appeal? Why do you think so many people "get" BR?

JAY: I don't know. Tenacity? Just not going away? I think that after a while, if you just keep playing, people eventually go, "Oh, well, I guess we have to listen to them now. [Laughs] They won't stop!" Maybe some of the lyrics get people to think. They stop and think, "Yeah, I feel like that. I think that, too. I wonder about that." We're a hard band, because some of our songs are simply entertaining, but most [] require a modicum of work-but sometimes when you put on a pair of headphones, you don't wanna work; you just wanna drift off into fantasy land. So I think [regarding] us, it requires an amount of attention just lyrically. I think musically we've kind of mastered the art of the two-minute punk-rock song. [Laughs] [] I think if anyone ever did know what made bands successful, they should write a book and become a bajillionaire.

BR are playing the Warped Tour, and afterwards they're planning on a fall U.S./Canada tour. Check out www.badreligion.com.

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EVERY TIME I DIE

By Don Sill

I get
caught
in the
moment,
it's as
intense
---as it gets

Western New York outfit Every Time I Die is still riding high off their second album, HOT DAMN (Ferret Music). The band (Keith Buckley, Andy Williams, Jordan Buckley, Mike Novak, and Steve Miciche) have earned fans all over the world with their blistering hard-

core sound and have been compared to everyone from Glassjaw to Dillinger Escape Plan. This spring the boys are prepping to get back into the studio as well as headline their own U.S. tour. This April they will host MTV2's HEAD-BANGERS BALL and promise to show some rarely-seen videos from Cave-In and Snapcase, among others.

Every Time I Die were recently in the middle of a U.K. tour with Chimaira when vocalist Keith Buckley dropped SKRATCH a line to let us know what's doing overseas.

SKRATCH: You guys are in England now?

BUCKLEY: I'm standing on a huge hill in

EVERY TIME I DIE

Edinburgh right now, and it's awesome, man.

SKRATCH: Cool. What are you looking at right now?

BUCKLEY: I'm looking at an island in the middle of the water and a few boats. There's tons of castles around. It's fuckin' awesome.

SKRATCH: Is this your first time in the U.K.?

BUCKLEY: No, we were here a few months ago with the band Nora. But that was only 10 days, and we're here for a month this time, so it's definitely the longest by far.

SKRATCH: What's the vibe like over there? Like, how are the kids responding to you guys?

BUCKLEY: They're really appreciative. Everyone is very nice, and the kids are very eager to talk to the band and stuff and find out about us—almost to the point of annoyance. [Laughs] In America the kids aren't really impressed by anything, but over here the kids are very willing to talk. Sometimes it gets really annoying and awkward, but.... [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Is it the same on stage, or do you realize you're somewhere else?

BUCKLEY: I definitely realize I'm somewhere else. I don't know. It might be Chimaira, the band we're touring with, because the kids that they draw are younger kids. Over in the States they have an older audience, but here they're a lot younger. I don't know if that's just relative to the band or just the demographic of hardcore fans over here.

SKRATCH: How young are they?

BUCKLEY: Oh, like 15 and 16, and that's about it.

SKRATCH: English kids love that hardcore/metal,

man.

BUCKLEY: Oh yeah.

SKRATCH: Being in England, do you feel that old-school punk energy of the Sex Pistols era? Are there a lot of Mohawks and stuff?

BUCKLEY: Not yet, not here. I have a feeling that once we get into the mainland there will be. We saw some of that in London, but not at the show. You see them in the streets, and then you remember where you are. It's like a landmark. This is London, this is where a lot of it all came from.

SKRATCH: What do you do in your down time? Raise hell?

BUCKLEY: Well, unfortunately, we do, but it's not intentional. Matt [DeVries] from Chimaira got jumped the other day in Liverpool when we were leaving a club.

SKRATCH: What happened?

BUCKLEY: It was totally unprovoked, just these dudes just being hardasses. Like 30 people jumped on him.

SKRATCH: They jumped the whole band?

BUCKLEY: No, they just went after Matt, who was lagging behind the group. So he got jumped by a lot of people and he missed a show because he had to go get stitches.

SKRATCH: They jumped him in the street? They didn't know he was part of Chimaira or anything?

BUCKLEY: No, they just saw him in the street, just some guys coming out of a dance club, and they jumped him.

SKRATCH: So it can get rough over there.

BUCKLEY: Yeah, but I just try and take it easy. I just walk around and take pictures and stuff. It's amazing here.

SKRATCH: Your shows must be intense. What goes through your mind just before you get on stage?

BUCKLEY: I actually don't think about it until I'm on stage. I don't psyche myself out, I just think about other things and as soon as we get there it just comes out. It's not planned; I get caught in the moment, it's as intense as it gets. I had no preparation for this.

SKRATCH: Just go up cold?

BUCKLEY: No matter how many shows you play, you're never prepared to get up there in a different country and having kids singing along to your music. It's such an awesome feeling. When I see those kids from other countries singing my stuff, it makes me realize how you're actually doing something right. It's like, "You finally made it."

SKRATCH: That must be a great feeling.

BUCKLEY: Hell yeah, and it is very inspiring to write better music, more music, and play more shows. As long as we got that drive, we're alright.

SKRATCH: Any new music?

BUCKLEY: No, we've just been touring consistently. We have a month off, and then we headline a tour in the U.S., and we're gonna write some new songs for that tour, have like two or three new songs.

SKRATCH: Cool. Any ideas of what the songs will sound like or anything?

BUCKLEY: No, not really. I think that's the best way for us to go about it, you know? It's better for us to never have any preconceived notions of anything we do. We just let it all out and see what happens in the midst of the crisis we're facing. We work better under pressure, and we'll find out what happens when we get there.

SKRATCH: Just let it out in the moment. That's great.

BUCKLEY: Exactly. That's the purest form.

SKRATCH: How much longer in England?

BUCKLEY: We have 10 days left on this tour. It's been a show every day for 26 days, and we're all on our last legs, we're running on fumes now. Waking up on the bus is just hell, and everyone's getting sick. We're all breathing the same air, and there's no windows on the bus, so.... We just had enough. [Laughs]



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songs, and then we went to different colleges. I went to Clemson, Devin to Winthrop, and Seth to the U of SC. Then I transferred to Winthrop to study music and stuff. Toby and Joel already were at Winthrop, and that's when we all met up.

SKRATCH: So how did Emery come to be then?

MATT: As college was ending, it kind of seemed like [all of our other] bands might be, too. Toby and Joey (the bass player in [Toby's other] band) asked Devin and I to dinner and asked if we wanted to leave our [other] band and start a new one with them and move away from SC. So we were immediately like, "Okay, where?" Someone said Seattle, and I said that sounds good, let's do that. Oddly enough, three weeks before we were to leave, Joey said, "Sorry, guys, I am getting married, and I'm not moving to Seattle." So we decided to just ask Joel if he wanted to go. He said okay and didn't even tell his [other] band he was leaving. Seth was one of the guys who had a girlfriend, so he drove out to Seattle with us [just] for the trip and then flew home after a week. But then his girlfriend dumped him. We felt bad for him, so we said he should come out and play drums. Devin was originally the drummer; now he plays guitar and sings. We met this guy Josh here in Seattle. He was like an instant best friend. He traveled with us and did merch. Then after we made the CD, there were too many keyboards to do live and still play guitar, so we asked Josh to cover the keys live. We thought he would just come up and stand on the side on a song or two, but he's kind of stealing the show now. He's half dancer, half screamer, and a quarter keyboardist. He lost half a tooth in San Francisco two nights ago: he swallowed it.

SKRATCH: What was the reasoning behind moving to Seattle?

MATT: It was far away, and we'd never been there. New York and L.A. were too scary for four guys from SC.

SKRATCH: Did you know that you guys wanted to work with Tooth & Nail? Did that play any part in choosing Seattle?

MATT: Not at all. We never even really considered it. We were pretty ignorant. I barely knew anything about Tooth & Nail or indie labels in general.

SKRATCH: So what got you into that music? Was it being in Seattle?

MATT: We were starting to listen to that stuff, but it was new. Being in Seattle changed us more than we thought it would. Everything on the West Coast seemed punk to us. It made us play a little faster and little catchier tempo-wise. We were more like Mineral or Sunny Day [Real Estate] before.

SKRATCH: I read that two of the members have teaching degrees and are currently teaching. Who are they and what do they teach?

MATT: [It's] kind of a rumor. Toby had a teaching degree. Devin and Toby and I all worked at children's camps and daycares last year as teachers.

SKRATCH: Seth was quoted as saying, "We want to show people that love is the greatest thing, not in a worldly way, but just a compassionate way. That's our message." Is this a sentiment shared strongly by the rest of the band?

MATT: Sure. Toby always gets mad, though, because he said that he said that, and Seth got credited.

SKRATCH: Well, hopefully this interview will set everybody straight on that quote and the teaching thing. How do you think the band goes about showing that love? Why do you want that to be your ultimate message?

EMERY

IT'S COOL, BECAUSE OUR
MUSIC IS NOW TRENDY;
BUT IT SUCKS, BECAUSE
OUR MUSIC IS NOW TRENDY. '99

EMERY

By Tiffany Chow

Four Southern boys packed up everything they had and trekked across country to pursue a musical vision they could not yet see clearly. They never knew that when they reached their destination, an entirely bright future would be found and a brand new life would begin for them. Emery made their new home in Seattle, and there made important new friends-some of which included their sixth and final member, as well as their new label, Tooth & Nail.

Matt took some time to talk with me about the journey they began in Greer, SC.

SKRATCH: How about a little bit of history. How did you meet each other, and how long were you playing together before you decided to move from South Carolina to Seattle?

MATT: Devin, Seth, and I have known each other since we were about five. We weren't good friends until late high school, though, and we played some music together then. We just played Silverchair and Nirvana

MATT: It's not that we are the most loving people or anything. We wish we were. I'd dare not want to claim that we show the most love or anything like that. We feel like all love comes from God, and we are compelled to try to spread that-but we do fail everyday.

SKRATCH: How does the recent surge of screamo-type music affect the band, since you share a similar sound?
MATT: It's cool, because our music is now trendy; but it sucks, because our music is now trendy.

SKRATCH: How does it feel to be titled that? Was it something you intended, or did that sound happen by chance?
MATT: I guess both. We thought it was cool to be emo and have some screaming, and then we heard the term "screamo" and were like, Okay, that's cool. Now, of course, it's overdone.

SKRATCH: What was the writing process like for the new album THE WEAK'S END?
MATT: It's a collaboration of different ideas put together by everyone and their own opinions. Mostly, Toby and Devin come in with ideas for songs, and we all have input and new ideas for it.

SKRATCH: Is it an over time thing, or did you go into the studio and write a bunch?
MATT: Over time, definitely. Sometimes we'll get on a roll, but normally it takes some time.

SKRATCH: Can you tell me what the song "Bloodless" is about?
MATT: A boy who grew up in church or religion and then got old enough to realize for himself what he believes and came back to it through learning from God and God's grace.

SKRATCH: What was the Tooth & Nail Tour like?

Was it the first time Emery toured the U.S.?

MATT: No, we've done smaller tours ourselves, but it's definitely the biggest and best: tons of people every night, so much support and response...It's great. Such awesome guys [in the other bands] to get to know encouraging fun to watch, too.

SKRATCH: Are you where you wanted to be now when you originally moved from SC?

MATT: We have a lot more, I think.

The truth is, nothing new can be discovered unless risks are taken-as Emery can attest to. As the newest band on Tooth & Nail Records, they have quickly gained attention and continue to rapidly grow in popularity. Check them out at www.emerymusic.com and listen to nearly half of the new album at www.theweaksend.com.



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THE MR. T EXPERIENCE

THE MR. T EXPERIENCE
Interview and photos by Annette Ovanessian

I'm not sure if Mr. T actually knows that he has a band named after him, but what I do know is that Mr. T is missing out on some good quality music in his CD collection. Frankly, I would be honored to have such a band be named after me, but I guess he's just too busy looking for a job these days instead!

Lookout Records' The Mr. T Experience is a Bay Area band that has been around for almost 20 years. They grew up playing music in the early years of punk rock and twisted it into their own signature style of sound. With softer rock energy with heart-pounding beats, MTX has successfully popularized the originality of staying true to the old-school, not necessarily sounding like the '80s, but like professionals. When it comes to songwriting, Dr. Frank (vocals, guitar) blesses the paper with his creativity of thought and his lyrics to come out in ways that are true to himself. Their new album, *YESTERDAY RULES*, is quite entertaining. It features songs that are both soft and sweet, and others that are both edgy and rage-filled. This album reaches out to those who are interested in getting something out of lyrics and learning about the promising days of punk rock.

I met MTX at the Troubadour in Hollywood way before their set. I took Dr. Frank to Johnny Rocket's on Melrose for a relaxing interview on the patio. Dr. Frank took his time to tell me the truth behind his experience in the music business. He spoke of the hard times and the good times, and how he deals with every day obstacles in the industry.

SKRATCH: Being involved in the music industry for almost two decades, what major changes/challenges have you gone through, and what have you learned from your experiences?

DR. FRANK: There's an ongoing challenge, which is no different in my world than for someone that's been in the music industry for only one year. There are added things when you've been through that, which is that you have an extra burden where you've got to keep persuading people that what you're doing is worth their consideration, even after they've already heard all this other stuff that you've done. The biggest challenge for me has been my songwriting. It's been a mission, and, taking it really seriously as I do, I run into this thing where people that were fans of the

genre that I'm in they're a little less willing to follow with what you need to do to make the songs do what there supposed to do. Artistically and professionally, the biggest challenge is that it's very hard to do something like this and figure out any way to get paid any money for it. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: Has the world of independent record labels changed at all, as far as promotion or popularity?

DR. FRANK: I only know from my experience with the independent labels that I've been on, which is only two: Rough Trade U.S. and Lookout Records. A couple of records were on a Rough Trade subsidiary that was starting these labels in different countries, and they signed up local groups to try to give themselves credibility for launching the label, which was really supposed to be an outlet for selling their big acts domestically, like The Smiths. So, they thought signing on bands like us added to their credibility, which was a foolish idea. We've been on Lookout since 1998, and when Lookout first began, it was basically just a one- or two-man operation. There was a time around the mid '90s for us when everyone involved had these ambitions to try to turn everything into more "real" band. Lookout Records responded to that and sort of started doing things that real record companies do. But, it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to do what real record labels do, and most of the time we don't have that. [So,] you just do your pretend version of it. As the little independent person, you just don't have any control over these things, so a lot of your activity is reacting to things and trying to capitalize loopholes in the system.

SKRATCH: Having had over 13 full-length albums out on Lookout Records, what motivated you to keep on making album after album with the same record company?

DR. FRANK: Other labels have come up from time to time, but one thing about staying with the same label is that it's a known quantity. I'm fortunate: I'm on a label that will always put my stuff out-at least so far they always have. I write the songs, and going along with that is just responsibility that they end up having some public assistance in some way-and the best way to do it so far that I've found is with Lookout Records. We both know what to expect from each other. There are other labels that have bands that are a lot more restrictive of what kind of sounds you can put on your records or what kinds of songs you can do. I know of bands having their records rejected



because of not sounding a certain way, and that's just not something that Lookout does.

SKRATCH: Was The Mr. T Experience one of the first few bands that were ever signed to Lookout? Who were some other bands signed on at the time?

DR. FRANK: One of the first few. When Lookout Records started, I knew the guy who started it. We put out our own first record. We were the first bands that were an established band outside of the Lookout Records. Lookout actually started in '88, and it was a year later that we joined. Their biggest success was Operation Ivy. They were one of the original bands that were signed.

SKRATCH: Since you write all the songs on the albums, do you feel like each new album represents a certain phase in your life?

DR. FRANK: Yeah, it sure does. [...] They are these milestones in life, and I associate all the things that happen to me. There's the REVENGE IT SWEET part of my life, and there's the ALCATRAZ part of my life, and there's the YESTERDAY RULES part of my life now. Putting out a record you put a lot into this one little thing and it's like all of your effort. I work on these songs for three, four years in some cases, and it's like packing it in to this package that represents a whole lot of experience. But there's the whole other thing where the songs themselves are reference points to stuff that has happened to you. It's a bizarre thing to look back on those records and get hints of the kind of person you were in 1992 when you wrote this album.

SKRATCH: Let's talk about your new album, *YESTERDAY RULES*. How long did it take in the making? What were some of the procedures?

DR. FRANK: A lot of the songs go back to the late '90s, during when we were recording the last album, *ALCATRAZ*. They are all drawn

from all the material that I had been writing at the time, that I made on my own demos. I really had a lot to choose from. I got together with our producer and tried to work as hard as we could to make every single aspect of the recordings match what distinguished the songs from each other like, there are no two songs with the same guitar sound. It was probably one of the easiest recording sessions in one sense, because we knew so clearly what we wanted to do; but it was the hardest one in some ways, because the producer and I argue like crazy. That's pretty normal, but it was even more than usual, and I think some of that tension can be discerned on the record.

SKRATCH: Some of your hardcore fans call this album some of your best material ever. How would you rate this album from all the others?

DR. FRANK: Well, I always think it's the best ever, and I always feel that I blew it in a lot of ways and wish I could go back and do it over. The things that are different about this one is that I think the arrangements and the production of the songs and how they are cast as recordings are more carefully integrated with the songs themselves. I have a lot of self-criticism about everything I do. I don't listen to them after I record them, because it's just too nerve-wracking, but I'm into this one. We've got a really good band this time. We've got a really good guitar and bass player.

SKRATCH: Tell me about the solo versions of some of the songs on this album that you did on another project called EIGHT LITTLE SONGS.

DR. FRANK: That was some demos that I kind of released on my own that I sold at shows and on my Weblog, and it was basically an idea that I would release the songs in sort of an unfinished form and try to get people to comment on them. I wanted to see how people would think of them and what kinds of things they thought about the songs. I thought it would be interesting to put out this pre-release thing. And, in fact, five of them ended up being on the album.

IT'S A BIZARRE THING TO
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The Agony Scene
By Zac

Exploding straight out of Tulsa, The Agony Scene is a brutal force that seemingly came out of nowhere and instantly gained notoriety in scenes all across the U.S. Perhaps it's their dark image, or perhaps it's their genre-defining sound; but no matter what it is, they've earned themselves a huge amount of fans and a good amount of respect opening for acts such as Extol and As I Lay Dying.

I got into contact via e-mail with guitarist Johnny and vocalist Michael because I just can't get enough of their self-titled freshman release. The outcome was an interesting look at some guys who somehow formed one of the best bands to hit the scene as of late.

SKRATCH: What's your definition of music in general?

JOHNNY: You know, like, chords and stuff.

MICHAEL: Our music is metal, but music as a whole is expression of emotion in the most amazing way to create art.

SKRATCH: How did the band come together?

JOHNNY: Well, The Agony Scene formed out of an old local band from around Tulsa that broke up and several months later wanted to reform. [...]

MICHAEL: Formed two-and-a-half years ago. Just friends getting together and writing songs evolved into what it is now.

SKRATCH: What is the best show/concert you've ever been to?

JOHNNY: Went to see AFI a couple months ago in Oklahoma City. They are absolutely incredible live.

MICHAEL: AFI, Bleeding Through, and Hot Water Music three months ago.

SKRATCH: How are things going with Solid State?

JOHNNY: They're going well. SS is a good label. They stand behind their bands strongly, and even though they don't have a ton of money to throw around, they support their bands as strongly as they can.

MICHAEL: They treat us very well.

SKRATCH: Which bands do you feel The Agony Scene is most influenced by musically?

JOHNNY: Well, I'd say a lot of the more prominent Swedish death-metal bands, [such as] At the Gates or In Flames; and then some of the more brutal American metal, such as Pantera...and if you stretch the term far enough, Slipknot.

MICHAEL: Pantera, The Haunted, and The Misfits.

SKRATCH: What are some of your favorite hobbies?

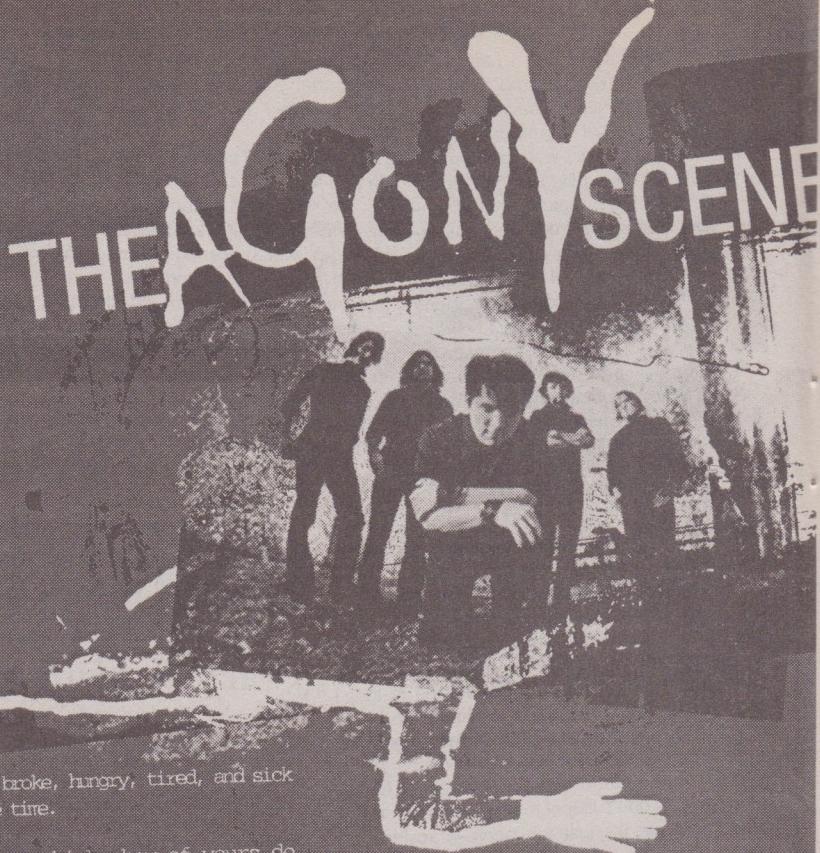
JOHNNY: I sit on my computer a lot. I play online games, I do graphic design, and I make Websites.

MICHAEL: Playing music, smoking cigarettes, watching movies, and drinking coffee.

SKRATCH: What are some pros and cons of being in a band?

JOHNNY: Well, some of the pros are that you can travel all the time and meet all kinds of awesome guys in other bands and otherwise and make money by playing shows in front of adoring fans (not all the time, but sometimes). And cons would be that you're never home (which sucks); and it's hard/impossible to have a job, which means you have next to no money all the time (which also sucks).

MICHAEL: Pros: seeing the country, meeting new people, and avoiding any real responsibility. Cons: being



dirty, broke, hungry, tired, and sick all the time.

SKRATCH: Which show of yours do you feel has gone the best or been the most enjoyable?

JOHNNY: I feel the most confident in front of our hometown crowd (we're from Tulsa, OK, just FYI). We played a show here just recently with As I Lay Dying that I think was really good. I think the venue said it was the biggest turnout they've ever had. Also, CA shows are always the best. I, personally, like San Diego, Corona, and Sacramento. I don't think we've ever had a bad show at one of those places.

MICHAEL: The Norma Jean tour date in Corona, CA, at the Showcase. All the shows on that tour were great, except the last one in Georgia. Little crappy festivals are not my thing.

SKRATCH: If you could choose how you die, what would you want to happen to you, and when?

JOHNNY: I'd want it to be completely unexpected and sudden, where I don't know it's coming till it's happened. I'm scared to death of dying. I'd like to wait as long as possible.

MICHAEL: When I'm too old to do things for myself, I want to die peacefully in my sleep.

SKRATCH: What are some of your

favorite records/albums?

JOHNNY: AFI's new one, SING THE SORROW, is quickly becoming an all-time favorite; and At the Gates' SLAUGHTER OF THE SOUL is a classic that I absolutely adore.

MICHAEL: Oh, God, so many.... Social Distortion's first one, The Misfits' WALK AMONG US, any record by The Smiths, The Cure's PORNGRAPHY, anything by Elvis Costello, The Clash...I could go on forever, so that will do.

SKRATCH: Which of your own songs is your favorite?

JOHNNY: Track 10, "The Damned".

MICHAEL: "Habeas Corpus" or "Lines of Suicide".

SKRATCH: Are you working on any new material? If so, when can we expect to hear it?

JOHNNY: We're talking about doing some demos of some new stuff in January (not that they'll be released or anything, but you might catch a new song or two at shows in the coming months).

MICHAEL: A little bit; and I'm not sure.

SKRATCH: Any band you dream of touring with?

I'd want it to be completely unexpected and sudden, where I don't know it's coming till it's happened. I'm scared to death of dying. I'd like to wait as long as possible.

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NEKROMANTIX INTERVIEW

by Marcia Taylor

Photos by Marcus Solomon

It's been 13 lucky years since Kim Nekroman formed internationally acclaimed psychobilly band Nekromantix in his native Denmark. During that time, the group has released four studio albums and a live album, toured the world, and found a home at Tim Armstrong's Hellcat Records label. Despite some line-up changes over the years, the current incarnation of Nekromantix still includes Nekroman, original guitarist Peter Sandorff, and Sandorff's brother, Kristian, on drums. The group's new record, which was released in April 2004, Kim Nekroman took time off from playing his signature coffin-shaped stand-up bass to talk with me from his home in Los Angeles.

SKRATCH: Do you live in the U.S. now, or do you go back and forth between here and Denmark?

NEKROMAN: I live here now, but the rest of the band goes back and forth.

SKRATCH: How did you first hear rockabilly music, being born and raised in Europe?

NEKROMAN: I was brought up with rockabilly by my mom. Then in the mid-to-late 70s, I listened to bands like The Cramps and Stray Cats that were mixing rockabilly and punk; they added something new to the sound. But it wasn't until many years later, after I quit the military, that I went into music. I was attending all of the music festivals and decided that I might as well be in a band so I could get paid for being there.

SKRATCH: I know you played some Southern California dates not too long ago; were they part of a U.S. tour?

NEKROMAN: No. We played four shows with Rancid and Tiger Army, then went straight into the studio to record the new record.

SKRATCH: Do you always write the lyrics for the songs?

NEKROMAN: We fight over it. Sometimes I do, sometimes Peter does. I'm doing them this time around. If we really don't want to, we have the drummer do it.

SKRATCH: Because you play psychobilly, I suppose that your themes are somewhat predetermined by the genre, but I was wondering if the new record has any other theme to it?

NEKROMAN: We always use the horror, but that doesn't mean that our music can't have other meaning. I use horror for the images; that's what I start from, and in that way it is kind of a theme. But I know people who listen to our music see much more into it than that.

SKRATCH: Were you always interested in horror films and images from a young age or is it something that captured your interest when you were older?

NEKROMAN: I guess being interested in horror is a normal thing. I recall seeing the old black and white KING KONG movie before I was old enough to go to school; it was very scary, and it fascinated me. Later, I saw the old black and white FRANKENSTEIN, and that was damn scary. But I wasn't scared stiff; I could see the funny stuff in it. I like the sense of humor in some of those old movies; there's definitely more to them than just the horror, which is why I use it in lyrics.

SKRATCH: I definitely noticed that your songs do have a humorous, tongue-in-cheek side to them; I think "Who Killed the Cheerleader" is really funny. Are there any particular movies you recall that influenced you to write a song or songs or that you just really love?

NEKROMAN: All the movies I watch inspire me with the lyrics I write. But that's only a starting point; the song doesn't always end like the movie. If I had to pick a horror movie that is a favorite, it would be the original NOSFERATU.

SKRATCH: That movie really is scary! I saw it in college for the first time and had terrible nightmares from it. What do you think of SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE? I think that's a fantastic tribute to NOSFERATU, although it's a great horror movie on its own, too. I just find Max Schreck a much more terrifying version of a vampire than Bela Lugosi, who always looked too sleek, chubby, and genial to me to be a scary vampire.

NEKROMAN: Well, NOSFERATU and DRACULA are two different kinds of movies. There was much more comedy in the later horror movies.

The original NOSFERATU is really gothic. It is always amazing to me that silent movies like that can leave such an impression. As I said before, I really appreciate the humor in the later movies, and that has influenced our music a lot.

SKRATCH: Do you like being on Hellcat?

NEKROMAN: Oh yeah - it's the best label we've ever

been on. The people there aren't like label people; it's like one big family. They let us do whatever we want; there's no supervision.

SKRATCH: I saw from the press release that you played in a band, HorrorPops, with your wife. Do you still do that, and is the music similar to Nekromantix's sound?

NEKROMAN: Yes, I do. In fact HorrorPops' new album came out in February [2004]. I would say the music is different; it's more straight up rock 'n' roll with more influences from '80s new wave and punk, which is partly because we didn't want to categorize the music when we first started the band.

SKRATCH: Are there any legendary rockabilly/psychobilly figures that you've had the opportunity to play with?

NEKROMAN: Not really. Even though I'm a fan of the music, I'm not freakish about it.

SKRATCH: At one of the earlier Hootenannys I remember seeing Robert Gordon and thinking that I was seeing a legend. Also, I saw Link Wray once.

NEKROMAN: Actually, Link Wray has been living in Denmark for years. We played with Robert Gordon in Finland once.

SKRATCH: Anything else that you'd like to add to what we've already talked about?

NEKROMAN: Recording is something we have to do. We like playing live best, but you have to make records to get an audience. I think this time we spent a week making the songs. I think that's better; it keeps the music impulsive, kind of always fresh. A lot of people tend to spend more and more time in the studio on their music as the band gets older, but to me, I think it's most important to keep it fresh.

SKRATCH: I agree. Some music is for sitting and listening to, but rockabilly and psychobilly is all about shaking your butt and having a good time.

NEKROMAN: Yeah, the keyword for both rockabilly and psychobilly is spontaneity.

SKRATCH: Thanks for taking the time to talk. I hope you and your family have a good holiday. Is it much different here than in Denmark?

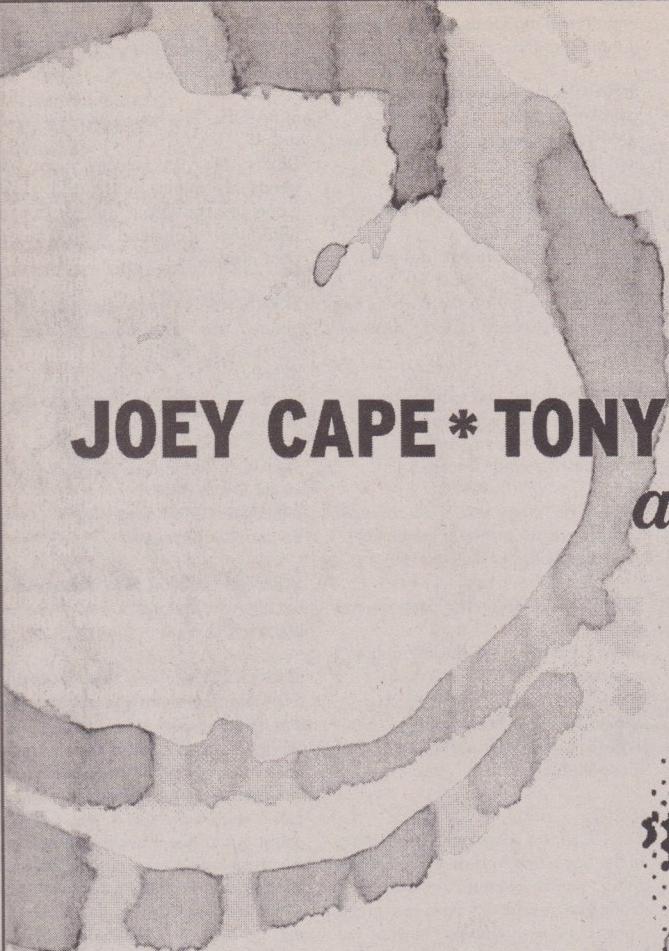
NEKROMAN: Well, there's no snow here. But I wouldn't have time to enjoy it even if there was.

SKRATCH: So you haven't taken up snowboarding yet?

NEKROMAN: No.

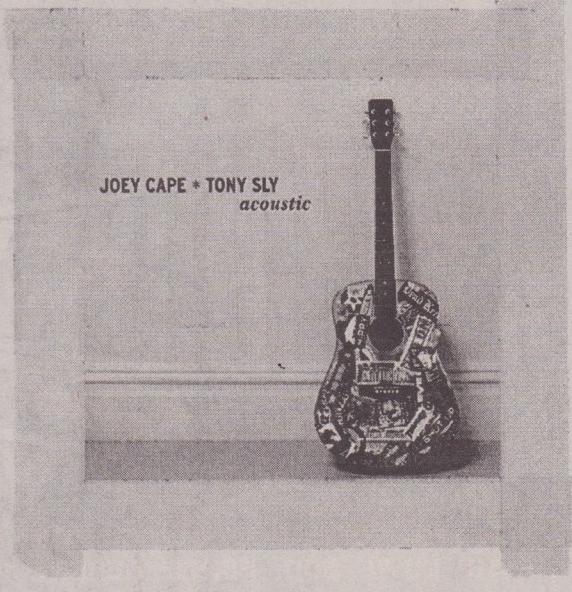
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Haste the Day
Interview by Denise Blaz

Spastic breakdowns and powerhouse screaming are only a snippet of what ornaments Haste the Day's debut CD, BURNING BRIDGES. I showed up late to the venue the night of this interview to find a line of people stretching around to the corner waiting in the rain to get into the show. But once inside, I introduced myself and began the interview shortly thereafter—only to find out that their music in no way matches their personalities.

Jimmy happens to think that's he's quite timid while doing interviews, so this interview was conducted in two parts—hence my asking some questions twice. The first part was done with frontman Jimmy Ryan, the second with guitarist Brennan Chaulk and drummer Devin Chaulk.

SKRATCH: Your CD just came out this past Tuesday, and you guys played at a high-school cafeteria for your CD-release show. Why did you decide to do it there?

JIMMY: We have a really great group of fans in Indianapolis. At our last show in Indianapolis, we had 700 kids out. It was amazing. And three guys from the band went to the high school, and a lot of people that go to our shows are from that high school, so we wanted to have a CD-release [show] with all our fans and all the people that we love. We also did another one a half an hour later at a record store, and there were about 250 people who came out to that who were at the first one, so it was really exciting.

SKRATCH: How has the response been so far towards the record?

JIMMY: We haven't gotten the first-week sales report yet, but I know that the first day in Indianapolis we sold 610 records. And a lot of my friends in different cities are calling me and saying that Best Buy was sold out.

SKRATCH: What are some of your favorite places to go in your hometown?

JIMMY: I know some of the guys hang out in coffeeshops, but I like to drive my Jeep. I love driving my Jeep.

SKRATCH: How do you entertain yourselves on the road?

JIMMY: It's pretty easy, because we're all best friends. We don't have a TV or anything, but we listen to CDs and we wrestle. We like to goof around.

SKRATCH: You're on Solid State Records. Is that a part of Tooth & Nail?

JIMMY: Yeah. The heavier bands are on Solid State.

SKRATCH: You scream a lot in your music. When did you first realize you had the capability to do that?

JIMMY: I was in eighth grade, and I started listening to metal, and I was like, "I just want to try that," so I just started screaming.

SKRATCH: Are you planning on voting?

JIMMY: I'm not registered, and I'm very upset that I'm not. But I would like to vote. I'm not at home, so....

SKRATCH: Can't you mail in your vote?

JIMMY: Can you really? I don't know these things, but I totally want to vote.

SKRATCH: What's a band out there right now that you think deserves more recognition?

JIMMY: I would say Emery on Tooth & Nail Records. They get a lot of recognition, but they deserve more, because they're awesome.

SKRATCH: What's your favorite band?

JIMMY: I love Fugazi, Bjork, and I really like The Police and The Cure.

SKRATCH: Spirituality plays a very prevalent role in your music. Has it always been a part of your life?

JIMMY: No. I'm 25 now, and in the past six years it's taken a role in my life. I haven't been into it my whole life, so it's kind of a new thing.

SKRATCH: How about the other guys?

JIMMY: They were all raised with religious backgrounds.

SKRATCH: What's your favorite word?

JIMMY: My favorite word would probably be "word," because I say that all the time. [Laughs]

SKRATCH: What's a hobby that you've always wanted to take up?

JIMMY: I've always wanted to learn how to play guitar—which is funny, because I'm in a band and I should learn.

SKRATCH: Do you have a motto that you live your life by?

JIMMY: I just think that we all try to love God first.

before anything. That's the most important thing for us, so I guess that, if that's a motto.

SKRATCH: Have you received any bad criticism for that?

JIMMY: Yeah, we have. But, you know, that happens.

SKRATCH: Who's the girl on the cover, and who designed it?

JIMMY: Asterisk Studios designed it. They do a lot of artwork for Tooth & Nail. And the girl on the cover is one of Demonhunter's Clark brothers' wives.

SKRATCH: If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would it be?

JIMMY: I want to say fun, but I hope that doesn't sound conceited.

SKRATCH: What are some of your other interests outside of the band?

JIMMY: I really like Jeeps a lot.

SKRATCH: What kind of Jeep do you drive?

JIMMY: I have a '94 Jeep Wrangler. I love Jeeps.

SKRATCH: What color is it?

JIMMY: It's white. It looks like one of those Barbie Jeeps.

[Part 2]

SKRATCH: Are you planning on voting in the upcoming presidential election?

MIKE: I can't, because I'm actually a Canadian resident. I have my green card, but I wish I could. Maybe one day I'll become a citizen.

SKRATCH: Who would you like to vote for?

BRENNAN: Bush. Is he going again?

SKRATCH: What's a band out there

right now that you think deserves more recognition?

MIKE: I've been listening to Bleeding Through a lot.

SKRATCH: Are you guys just into metal?

DEVIN: No, I'm actually more into bands like Jimmy Eat World. I like Copeland and Death Cab for Cutie.

BRENNAN: Copeland is my favorite band right now.

SKRATCH: Is there anything that annoys you guys about the other members in the band?

BRENNAN: Jason cracking his toes all the time. [I hope that makes the magazine!]

SKRATCH: Is there anything that you would like to add?

BRENNAN: Oh, I don't know.... What do people usually say?

SKRATCH: Stuff like, "Go buy our CD."

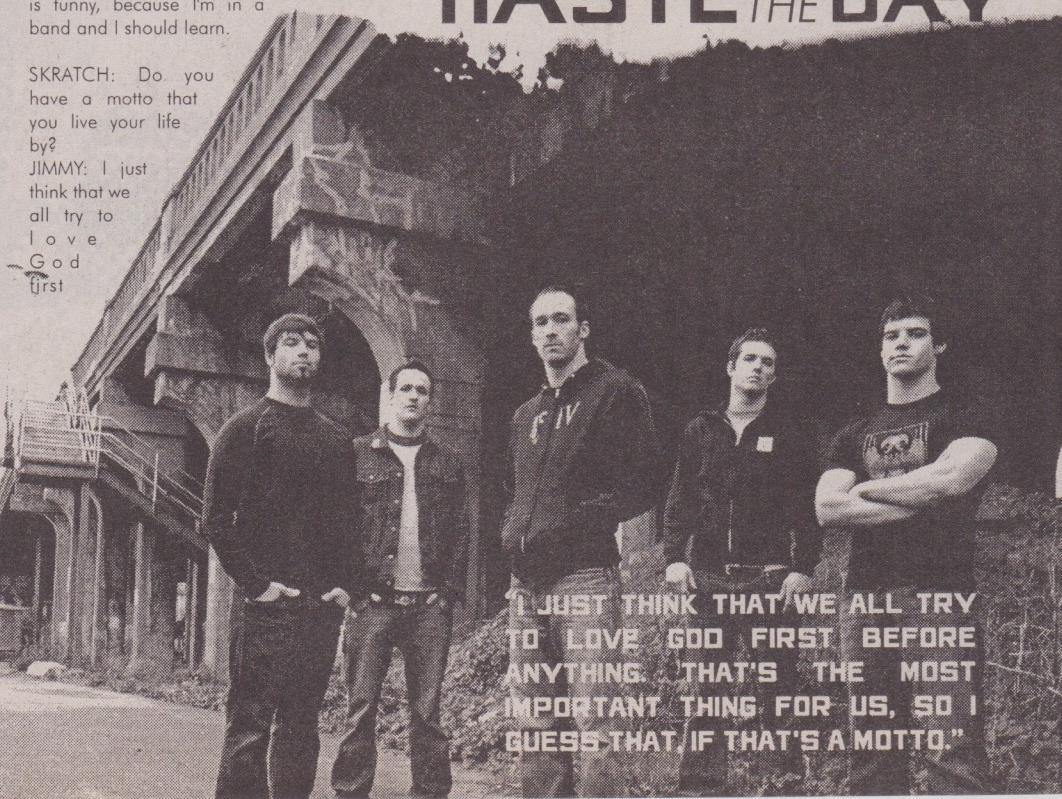
BRENNAN: [Laughs] Okay, then: go buy our CD.

SKRATCH: Well, let's talk about the CD. How stoked are you about it now that it's come out?

DEVIN: I love it. A friend of mine called me today and told me that all his friends that despise screaming music are really liking the CD. We're not the best at what we're doing, but I think we have a little bit of something different. So I say: go buy our CD. If you hate our style of music, just give it a chance—you might like it.

Haste the Day will be touring with non-stop tenacity this year. Go to www.hastetheday.com to find out tour dates.

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CASEY JONES



CASEY JONES
By Janelle Jones

Casey Jones, a straight-edge hardcore five-piece from Florida, prove their worth with their pummeling debut full-length, *THE FEW, THE PROUD, THE CRUCIAL* (Indianola Records). Incorporating crushing guitars, tempestuous drums, searing bass, tough vocals, and of course the requisite hard-hitting breakdowns, Casey Jones have a winning formula, highlighted by intelligent lyrics that are scattered with just enough sarcasm to temper the serious subject matter.

Answering my questions via e-mail from Australia (!), of all places, during a tour with Evergreen Terrace (his other band), vocalist Josh let me in on all things Casey Jones, all the while maintaining his indefatigable sense of humor.

SKRATCH: Briefly, how'd the line-up come about? Have you had any line-up changes? When did you form the band?

JOSH: We just wanted to write some crackin' jams. It started out my brother, Caleb, the old ET [Evergreen Terrace] bass player, Josh Smith, and myself. We wrote a few songs, and then Poops came along and shredded, as well. We tried a few people out for vocals, but everyone pretty orange. I ended up trying it out, and it seems to work so far. We asked Jason if he would mind playing guitar to fill up my space. I don't know if this made much sense. I'm in Australia right now, and I haven't slept for over 24 hours. This place is crucial.

SKRATCH: Which of you were/are in Evergreen Terrace? Is anyone else in another band(s)?

JOSH: Jason and myself are in ET, Josh (bass player) was ET's original bass player. Caleb and Poops are in another band, called Time to Die.

SKRATCH: Reasoning behind the decision to name the band Casey Jones?

JOSH: Because that bitch has a cricket bat.

SKRATCH: Other than straight-edge and doing what you feel to be right, what are

some other important themes discussed on the album?

JOSH: Being a man, taking responsibility, suicide (how it's not cool), hanging with friends, turning into a 9-to-5 zombie, choosing to live life your own way and no one else's.

SKRATCH: What's the writing process like for you guys?

JOSH: Usually, I will write a song, and then we will add/take away some parts, have fun with it. We practice naked, and Josh Smith puts whipped cream all over himself.

SKRATCH: What's with the bonus track? Who's performing it?

JOSH: Oh, that's a boiled human named Johnny Unstoppable, probably one of the best dudes I have ever had the pleasure to share a friendship with.

SKRATCH: The artwork is crazy! Whose idea was it?

JOSH: Mine. Ha. I knew everyone else in the band would go for it. Ha.

SKRATCH: In the press release, it says you see yourselves "as a straight edge confederacy out to show the non-straight edgers what they are about." Is this confrontational at all? Do you have a problem with non-straight edgers? or do you just want to show that another way of life is possible?

JOSH: I don't think anyone in the band actually ever said that, ha. But to answer the question: no, we do not have a problem with any non-edgers. A ton of our friends aren't edge, [and] it doesn't bother any of us at all. To each his own, everyone for themselves. We are just sharing what is right for us, and if you decide that it's right for you, then good, that's awesome; if not, then that's fine, too.

SKRATCH: What sets you apart from many bands is your use of humor/sarcasm in your music ("If You're Smoking in Here You Better Be on Fire" is classic!), while getting your straight-edge message across. Do you think more people relate to your music

because of some of the humorous lyrics/titles?

JOSH: I think some people might take it a lot easier, since we are kinda comical. We just don't want to overdo the comedy thing and have people not take us [seriously], ha. I'd rather have fun with some songs than every song just being [the] same old, typical edge lyrics.

SKRATCH: Alternately, on "Pain 101", you sing, "This is my voice to teach what I believe is the right way for me." So despite the bits of humor, of course you are serious. But do you think it is preaching at all?

JOSH: I can see where someone might think we are preaching because of the fact that we are a straight-edge band. When people hear a straight-edge band say something from the stage, they automatically think that we are preaching, just because they are an edge band and saying something like, "Don't drink and drive." Someone could take that as preaching, and someone could take that as advice. It all depends on the person. I don't care what it comes off like.

SKRATCH: What are some seminal bands that got you into hardcore?

**66 We practice naked,
and Josh Smith puts whipped
cream all over himself.**

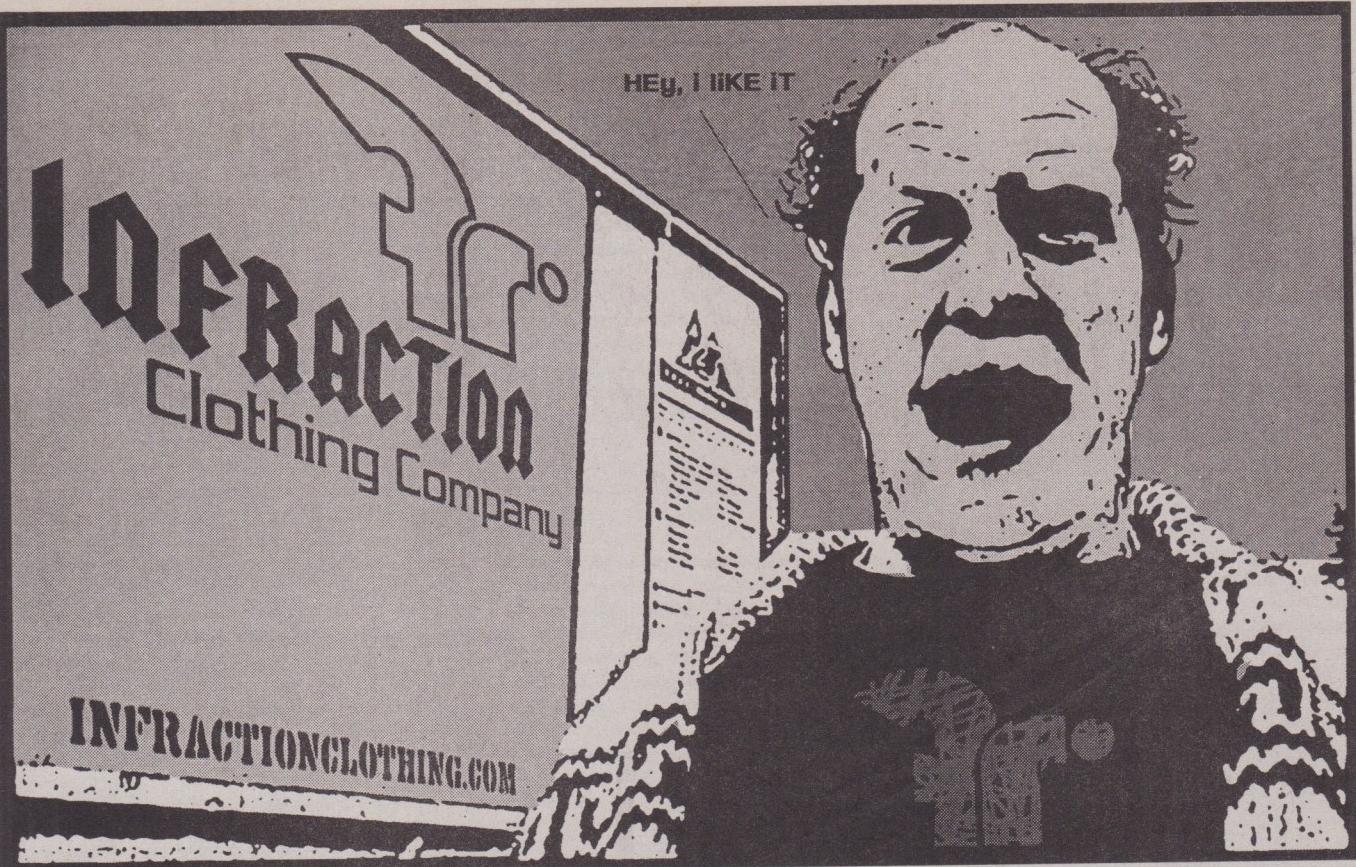
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JOSH: I started this gangsta shit.

SKRATCH: Are there any bands that you're compared to that you don't really think you should be? If so, does it bother you at all?

JOSH: Hmm. I don't think people really have said that much to us. I have heard a few people say Stretch Armstrong, but I don't think we really sound like them at all. I would rather be compared to Good Riddance, ha.

SKRATCH: Give us an incentive to see you

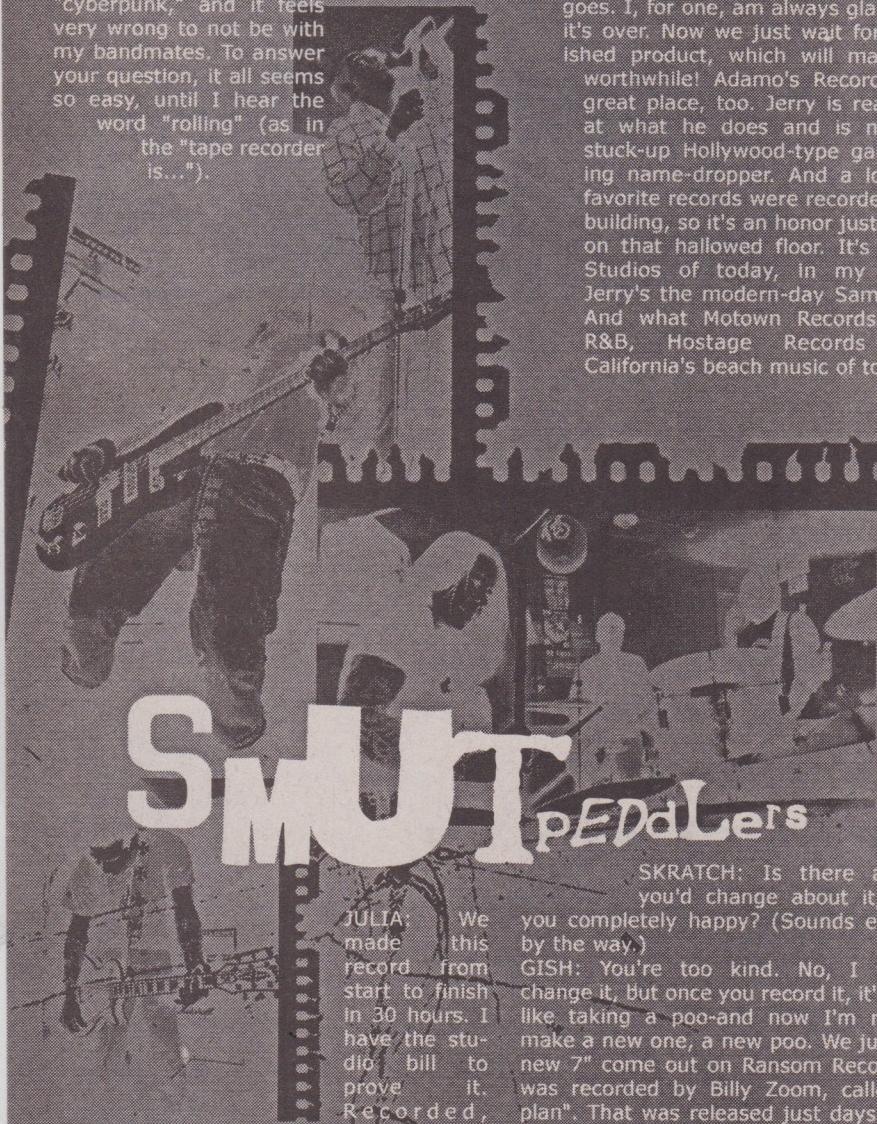


SMUT PEDDLERS
By Janelle Jones

Seemingly irritated the interview was done via e-mail, Smut Peddlers (sans guitarist Sean, whose computer was down) were still kind enough to answer my annoyingly trite questions and bust my proverbial balls. Making good of an unwanted situation, they weren't afraid to take some stabs at yours truly—or SKRATCH, for that matter. Unfortunately, due to space constraints, not all of their wicked humor could be printed here. But to hear a bit about their latest LP COMING OUT (on TKO, with whom they seem to be very happy) and some wisecracks, read on.

SKRATCH: Talk about COMING OUT.

GISH: First off, today is March 11th, 2004, 8:30 a.m. West Coast. I have been emailed questions, and I'm drinking coffee and smoking cigs trying to wake up. I would like to be surfing, but it's flat. Anything I answer could change before I'm even done typing it. This may be "cyberpunk," and it feels very wrong to not be with my bandmates. To answer your question, it all seems so easy, until I hear the word "rolling" (as in the "tape recorder is...").



SMUT PEDDLERS

JULIA: We made this record from start to finish in 30 hours. I have the studio bill to prove it. Recorded,

mixed, and mastered. AND, we weren't rushing. We just had a good flow. We were well-rehearsed, I guess.

SCOTT: It's a lot like playing live, except that you can try things over again if you fuck up, there's no crowd, you don't get paid, there's no free drinks, and there's no stage.

JOHN: Subject matter of the songs is gen-

erally life experience, potential life experience, or fantasy. [Also,] places we live, people we know, restaurants we dine at, drugs we inject, cars we crash, amps we burn up with scorching guitar licks, and what not. The record took five lifetimes, run concurrently, to create and one weekend to record. Traditionally, we record shit on the weekend of the Super Bowl, in protest against the Spielberg-run corporate media blitzkrieg, so we missed Justin Timberlake flashing Janet Jackson's plastic tit live; but I got to have the image rammed down my throat about eight million times during the next week on the so-called "news." [...] Recording is not fun for me, 'cause it's like a test and I usually haven't been studying, so I'm stressed out, writing lyrics on the day of the recording. So in a lot of cases we have never even practiced the songs, and the instrument-wielders have finished recording their tracks without ever hearing what the lyrics are gonna be. Interpersonal relations get ugly, because decisions must be made, tastes collide, egos flare, nerves fray, and all that. But that's just the way it goes. I, for one, am always glad [when] it's over. Now we just wait for the finished product, which will make it all worthwhile! Adamo's Recording is a great place, too. Jerry is really good at what he does and is not some stuck-up Hollywood-type game-playing name-dropper. And a lot of my favorite records were recorded in that building, so it's an honor just to stand on that hallowed floor. It's the Sun Studios of today, in my opinion. Jerry's the modern-day Sam Phillips. And what Motown Records was to R&B, Hostage Records is to California's beach music of today. [...]

JOHN: I would like to have been prepared months in advance, I would like to re-record vocals where I was gasping for air. But we're not trying to be Boston or Steely Dan, and the emphysema kicked in, so fuck it. And I'll probably always be running late on songwriting. I'm gonna try to write a few soon, before my back's to the wall...but I've been saying that for years. The other folks in the band all did a smashing job, which I cannot find fault with. I will always be hyper-critical of myself, though, and will never be satisfied. I look forward to our next record. I hope we can hang on to [guitarists] Sean and Scott, 'cause they are our best yet, and we have gotten along so far, which is hard for most bands to do. Each Smut Peddler is an "only child," which always makes for some wacky high jinks. Somehow, though guitarists have come and gone, the essential band has survived. And although we argue, fuss, and fight, when I get old, I know these people will be like my blood family, 'cause we've been through a lot together. I even miss all the old guitarists (though I don't remember all their names).

SKRATCH: Do you feel your sound has changed/progressed at all from record to record?

GISH: Sure. We have our best lineup, and I'm slowly learning to play bass. I live in a town where the best bands are coming from, so you need to play better or you're lost in the mix of shit bands.

JULIA: Yeah, we weren't very good musicians when we started. Luckily, we were young and full of energy. There are those "fans" that don't want [you] to change and only want to hear the old stuff, but we have somewhere around 100 original recorded songs. We've had eight guitar players, so obviously the new guys don't know the old stuff. We like writing and playing new songs. Why dwell on the past when we can improve with the future?

SCOTT: This has been my favorite Smut Peddlers album to record yet.

JOHN: Yes. Julia has always been a great drummer, but she still manages to improve. Gish shows marked improvement technically and seems more relaxed and confident lately. Sean and Scott are both getting used to each other and seem more comfortable. That makes for good shows. If one of those two busts out a set of P-90 pickups, we'll be in like Flynt! I think the melodies are getting better and better, and we have our own distinct identity and sound.

SKRATCH: I have that SNOISSES Skateboarder comp. When you go to the ALL MUSIC GUIDE and look it up, it lists all the artists/songs on the record; and when you click the link for "Smut Peddlers," it brings you to some East Coast rappers with the same name. Ever have any problems with those guys, being that you have the same moniker?

GISH: That's us! It's our side project. I love rap. It's so intense...

JULIA: What? Another band called SMUT PEDDLERS? Oh god, what do we do now? Yeah, we own the trademark to the name "Smut Peddlers." The "other" band doesn't exist, hasn't existed in years...yadda yadda yadda.

SCOTT: Did you know that your magazine's name, "SKRATCH," is actually a word and it's spelled S-C-R-A-T C-H? Did you get in a lawsuit and have to change the spelling?



THE RECORD TOOK FIVE LIFETIMES,

JOHN: RUN CONCURRENTLY, SNOISSES OR ALL MUSIC GUIDE,

Yeah. That's a problem. AND ONE WEEKEND TO RECORD?

SKRATCH: You guys have certainly been around a while. What were your aims at the beginning? Have they changed since?

GISH: I have been holding a secret for a long time, and I think I'd feel better if told the SKRATCH readers: I wash my ass just before I was my face to make sure I do a good job on my ass. (Oh, do I feel better.)

JULIA: I never wanted to be in a band, I just loved playing drums. Gish was my mean-looking neighbor, and when he asked me to play, I was too scared to say "no." I'm a self-taught drummer, but now that I'm older I want to learn the stuff I missed, so I'm taking lessons from drumming legend

and all around nice guy, DJ Bonebrake of X.

SCOTT: My aim has always been to find a hot, rich girlfriend to support me so that I don't have to work for the rest of my life. I don't think that has changed. If there [are] any hot rich girls out there reading this, e-mail a picture and your last bank statement to: scott@smutpeddlers.net.

JOHN: To live happily ever after. No.

SKRATCH: Anything you'd like to add?

GISH: Does this mean it's over? Shit, I was just getting going. Add...let's see.... Only: hate people

'cause they're dumb or child molesters; legal-

ize drugs; pray that we can one day have an entirely new government that doesn't make laws every time they think of one; try not to ever open your mind to anything new; just live like a jock; if you want to fight, go to a different show; figure out a way to download shirts, patches, pins, records, tickets for shows, as well as music, so that small bands don't make any money at all; to thy own self be true. xoxo Gish Stiffness.

JULIA: This band has been part of my life for 11 years now. My best friends are in this band. This band is what keeps me sane when I'm having one of "those days" (no, not PMS, just a bad day). I can't imagine where my life would be if it wasn't for this band. I would like to say "thanks" to my bandmates for all their hard work and ded-

ication. Julia Smut

SCOTT: I just want to reiterate the fact that I am looking for a hot, rich girlfriend who has no problem supporting me and driving me around. That e-mail address again is: scott@smutpeddlers.net. I am also starting a political movement whose agenda is to eliminate Daylight Savings Time, socialize cable television, and destroy the DMV. Donations can be sent to: Prospect c/o Ransom Records. Thank you for your time. Scott

JOHN: Thanks for interviewing us. Next time, try to come out here and do it in person so we can buy you dinner at Fusion Sushi or La Capilla and do more diplomatic ass-sucking. I am on the outs with my better half now because I kept her up all night while I was typing this on the computer. I am not computer literate. Now I don't know how to send the answers I wrote back to whoever is asking the questions. Interviews should be done IN PERSON, with EVERY band member present. I hope we make it to wherever anyone who reads this lives (if you want us to play there). I think America is fucked up and needs to be changed, but I love America and I thank god I live here. If you don't like America and you think you can get a better deal, get the fuck out of here. Don't believe the political propaganda you read in these music magazines...unless it's coming from me or someone I agree with. Peace to all. May God be with you.

All right, all right. Next time we'll get someone from California to interview 'em. Check www.smutpeddlers.net for more info and tour dates.

TIGER ARMY

III: GHOST TIGERS RISE

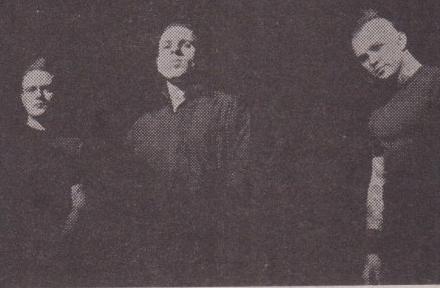
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SMOGTOWN INTERVIEW
11/20/03

by Marcia Taylor

The members of Dana Point, California-based quartet Smogtown have managed to retain the group's original line-up for 8 years, no mean feat. Back in 1995, Chavez, Guitardo, and Tim formed an alliance at the various local parties where they kept meeting. Later that year, the guys saw Chip at a gas station and struck up a conversation with him, impressed by his tattoos. Things clicked, so they bought a van and put together a demo tape. Smogtown is Tim on drums, Chavez on vocals, Guitardo on guitar, and Chip on bass.

SKRATCH: How did you get your foot in the door when you started out?

TIM: We pitched ourselves as an opening act for any and all bands in Orange County.

SKRATCH: And what were some of those bands?

TIM: The Stitches, The Starvations, Bonecrusher, Smut Peddlers, and The Crowd, one of my all time favorites.

SKRATCH: It seems like you have quite a few 7-inch releases, as well as songs on several comps. How many full-lengths has the band put out?

TIM: We have three full-lengths on Disaster Records, as well as three 7-inches on the Hostage label. Our new record is on TKO.

SKRATCH: What are some of Smogtown's musical influences?

TIM: It varies. Everything from '80s punk to old rock 'n' roll stuff, too. For me, it's all the '80s stuff as far as punk influences go. I like The Clash a lot; Devo is one of my favorite bands of all time. The Adolescents, Circle Jerks and TSOL are also influences; I think these three bands come out more in our sound.

SKRATCH: I know I saw you play at Chain Reaction with Smut Peddlers several years ago. What are other places the band plays?

TIM: Club Mesa had a good thing going for awhile. We used to play at Rockfield Tavern, which is now The Gypsy Lounge. We played once at The Galaxy, opening for The Hunns and Zeke. That was a bad experience. We had to sell tickets in advance. Well, we gave them the money, but the management wouldn't give us our \$100 and our sodas. They told us, "opening bands don't get food OR drinks!" I was so pissed; I knocked over the media stands and a 20-foot palm tree. The bouncers threw me out. They're so greedy at The Galaxy. But mostly we've just played dive bars our whole career, like the Doheny Saloon, which is the smallest place we ever play.

SKRATCH: The bouncers at The Galaxy are awful, just so eager to drag people out and beat them.

TIM: I'm surprised they didn't beat me up; I was being an idiot.

SKRATCH: Tell me about FUHRERS OF THE NEW WAVE, the disc you sent me.

TIM: I sent you FUHRERS because I think it's our best record. It came out in 2000 on Disaster.

SKRATCH: I really like the way it sounds - very old school. I noticed that there are a couple of songs about someone named "Judy". Is she a real person?

TIM: The NEW WAVE record is a concept album. Chavez is really neat about coming up with clever lyrics. Anyway, he just came up with the whole concept; you could almost make a movie out of it, like JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR. He took the recipe from that. Fuhrers of the New Wave is a teenage band that the local powers-that-be want to get rid of because they believe they are corrupting the town's teenagers. Judy is a rich kid that the guys in the band acci-

bands, and our band was never organized at that level; we were just dive-barring it. But you did used to have a lot more small places to play than now.

SKRATCH: I agree with you. I really miss the punk shows at Chain Reaction; but I guess they stopped booking them because of problems with kids drinking and the Anaheim Police Department. Now the only place to regularly see punk shows is at The Showcase in Corona. Thanks for taking the time to talk.

SMOGTOWN

dentially kill. She was popping pills and drinking with the band, and she ODed. They threw her body into the Santa Ana River. It all comes together in the end. Bodi 601 is a vigilante that the community sends after the band, and he radiates all its members at the end of the movie.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS THAT EVEN IF YOU KILL OFF ONE BAND, MORE NEW TEENAGE PSYCHOS/BANDS WILL COME UP AND LEAD THE KIDS.

SKRATCH: Does it take place in the future?

TIM: No, it's in a suburban surf city like now. The moral of the story is that even if you kill off one band, more new teenage psychos/bands will come up and lead the kids.

SKRATCH: Has Smogtown done much touring?

TIM: Not much. We are the most disorganized band ever; we never could get it together. We did a West Coast tour, but had a bunch of cancellations. I did it all myself. But we all work full-time, and it's just really hard to organize us all getting time off together. And no booking agent would touch us. We had records out, but we wouldn't quit our day jobs to go on tour. We were doing pretty good; we made enough money with the music to pay for our lockout, beer, and shows. So we haven't been putting any money into it.

SKRATCH: What do you think of the Orange County scene now, compared to what it was like in '95, when you first started?

TIM: I feel like the OC scene just died. It's hard to keep going with no places to play. Now you have to go to places like The Galaxy and House of Blues to see

To keep up with what's going on with the band, check the website: <http://smogtown.tripod.com> It's run by a fan who updates it pretty regularly.



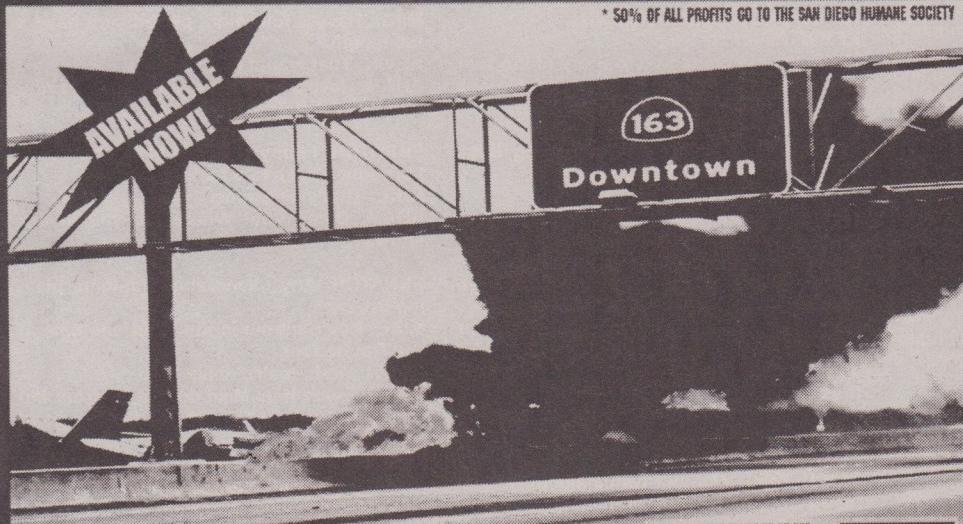
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- RYAN FERGUSON (OF NO KNIFE)
- RESOLVER
- WATERLINE DRIFT

HILLTOP HILLTOP

HALIFAX

Halifax
Interview by Beth VanBoxtel

Halifax—a five-piece band from Thousand Oaks, CA—is the group that have been whispered through Websites and bounced off the walls of various venues around the country. Halifax is prepared to take their music to the next level and play in shows with more acclaimed bands. They commit to being a nationally touring band with upcoming events on their plate such as the Skate and Surf Festival in New Jersey (on April 17). Earlier this year, Halifax released a six-song EP known as A WRITER'S REFERENCE on NoMilk Records that displays for listeners their advanced guitar skills, vocal talent, and surprising riffs and hooks.

SKRATCH: We'll start out with your touring plans for the spring and summer. What are hoping to achieve on these tours?

ADAM: Phone numbers of girls in skirts.

MIKE: So true.

KEVIN: Great interview, you jackasses, Anyone gonna really answer?

MIKE: We're planning on some East Coast stuff with Boys Night Out in early April, as well as Skate and Surf Fest; and summer is still in the works. As far as achievements, we just want to play as much as we can and get our music out there.

KEVIN: And sell as many copies of A WRITER'S REFERENCE as we can.

MIKE: Yeah, that, too.

SKRATCH: Okay, then. How has the EP been selling online and at shows?

ADAM: That depends on how well we play any given night.

KEVIN: Today it is #7 on Smartpunk.com.

MIKE: It's doing fairly well, considering how new we are and how long it has actually been out. I'm happy with how it's doing.

SKRATCH: Awesome. What's your favorite song to play live from the EP?

MIKE: My favorite song to play live has to be "Sydney".

ADAM: We've been closing with "Broken Glass Syndrome" lately, and I think it's the most energetic, my favorite. Wait, I mean "Sydney", too.

MIKE: There you go, Adam: always giving in.

SKRATCH: With the song on Purevolume.com, have you noticed that

kids are coming out and singing along to that song simply because they can find it online? And how has the Internet helped boost the support of your band?

KEVIN: I've noticed random people are singing along with it. I have no idea where they are getting it. Either Purevolume or mp3.com when that was still up, and possibly even our e-card.

MIKE: When we first recorded that song, we put it up on Absolutepunk.net and mp3.com. Then when Purevolume came up, it went on there. So yeah, that's been the most accessible song, and I personally have noticed a lot of people at random shows singing along.

ADAM: I don't think one person has heard the stuff off of Purevolume, but "Sydney" was on mp3.com, and a wicked amount of kids did hear it off of there before AWR came out. They do sing, and it's awesome.

KEVIN: The Internet is an amazing promotional tool.

ADAM: I think the Internet as a whole has created more buzz on this band than any street team could have.

KEVIN: Look where this interview is happening.

MIKE: Good call.

SKRATCH: If you were to describe your music to someone who has never heard it before, how would you do so?

ADAM: THE question. [Laughs]

KEVIN: Pass.

MIKE: We are compared to Story of the Year and The Used often. So when people ask me, I say a John Feldman band.

ADAM: It's rock 'n' roll.

KEVIN: We get compared to Taking Back Sunday a lot, too.

SKRATCH: Are any of those bands that you'd like to tour with? Or what would be your dream tour to play?

KEVIN: I would love to tour with any of those bands.

ADAM: Any band is a band I want to tour with. We all just want to tour.

MIKE: I'm with Adam: I'd love to tour with those bands.

KEVIN: But what would our dream tour be, kids?

ADAM: [Iron] Maiden.

KEVIN: Yeah, let's tour with Maiden.

ADAM: I did: Maiden and [Judas] Priest. That's a tour!

MIKE: Dream tour is with The Higher.

SKRATCH: Why The Higher?

KEVIN: We already toured with The Higher, you idiot.

MIKE: 'Cause they are awesome guys, and

friendly people make the best tours.

SKRATCH: How many days out of the year are you on tour?

MIKE: We just started touring, so not many yet.

ADAM: As far as touring, we're all for the most part still in school, so we don't have that much time to tour.

ADAM: Summers and weeks off are our prime times to tour.

ADAM: I have a feeling this might be our last semester in classes, though.

SKRATCH: Because you want to pursue this band more?

MIKE: Yeah!

ADAM: Definitely.

KEVIN: Yeah, for sure

ADAM: But stay in school, kids.

KEVIN: We're at the point now where we can actually pick and choose some tours.

KEVIN: I never ever thought I'd be saying "no" to an invitation to any tour.

MIKE: Yeah, that's amazing: to have options.

SKRATCH: What is one goal you'd like to achieve with this band by the end of 2004?

KEVIN: I want to be touring with a full-length.

ADAM: Have a local following to some degree. We get no love at home.

KEVIN: Yeah, we have zero hometown following.

MIKE: Have a following, period, and have a full-length.

KEVIN: That would be nice.

ADAM: Have a fan bake me a cake and bring it to the show. That'd be nice.

SKRATCH: Funny you should mention that: I brought a cake to a band last night.

MIKE: That's awesome.

ADAM: Damn you! Where are you at our shows?

SKRATCH: Any memorable moments playing live?

MIKE: Kevin hit me in the head one time at the Troubadour.

KEVIN: Yeah, really, really hard.

ADAM: Every time Mike does a 3/4 front flip and lands on his back. Oh, man, that's good to watch.

MIKE: It was fun. Seriously, Adam, you are the only one who appreciates that.

KEVIN: One time we were playing, and something with the P.A. exploded, and Chris ran away like a little girl—and we kept playing.

MIKE: That was awesome.

ADAM: Yeah, he ran like a girl and covered his ears.

KEVIN: Mike throws up when we play to big

crowds. That's quite memorable.

MIKE: Yeah, well, I get nervous.

SKRATCH: You guys get along well. How long have you known each other?

MIKE: Who says we get along well? ADAM: We all bond by making fun of Mike. I've known Kevin and Chris since high school. We're tight like a 12-year-old. (Oh, that was bad.)

KEVIN: I've known Chris and Adam for a number of years. Good times in high school. Then I met Mike through Halifax long before I was in the band. And Tommy and I met at my first Halifax band practice.

MIKE: Chris and I were in the original Halifax, and Tommy and I have been friends for a few years. I met Kevin and Adam through Chris.

ADAM: I do feel close to all these knuckleheads, though.

SKRATCH: What are three albums that you can't leave home without?

ADAM: Refused's *SHAPE OF PUNK TO COME*, Weezer's *BLUE ALBUM*, and The Casket Lottery's *MOVING MOUNTAINS*.

KEVIN: THE CHRONIC, DOG-GYSTYLE, and who needs a third one?

MIKE: Saosin's EP, Thrice's *ILLUSION OF SAFETY*, and Jimmy Eat World's S/T.

KEVIN: Yeah, I listen to CLARITY (Jimmy Eat World) a lot.

SKRATCH: Speaking of Thrice, what are some other Southern California bands you like to support? play with? think people should listen to?

ADAM: Well, we really like The Higher from Las Vegas.

MIKE: Mind Driver from Orange County. They are way nice guys—and a good band.

KEVIN: Any band from NoMilk Records, The Higher from Vegas, Taken from Orange County, and definitely Mind Driver.

ADAM: There's this band Halifax from Thousand Oaks, too. They need to be listened to.

MIKE: Good call.

KEVIN: Yeah, you should definitely make them your favorite band.

SKRATCH: [Laughs] Nothing like shameless self-promotion.

ADAM: Nope. We have zero shame.

SKRATCH: Anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

ADAM: I don't know who that brave girl was who first decided to wear a skirt in the middle of winter with her Ugg boots, but I just want to salute her and thank her for her contribution to society.

MIKE: I want to say one thing: On our first tour we recently did with The Matches, I want to thank every one of those kids that came and did sing along to "Sydney" and all the kids who gave us a chance.

KEVIN: If we're gonna say thanks to people, I'd really like to thank Chris's family for the countless things they have done for Halifax.

ADAM: These aren't linear notes, fags.

KEVIN: Don't use that word!

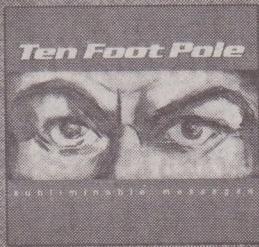
MIKE: Well, in that case, check out Halifax, PLEASE.

Check www.halifaxrock.com for updates, touring info, and free music downloads.



Ten Foot Pole

subliminal messages



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WITH EVERY IDLE HOUR
Photos and Interview by Janelle Jones

Seven years into their career, Long Island stalwarts With Every Idle Hour (vocalist/guitarist Sergei, guitarist Sean, drummer Austin, and newest recruit bassist Lou) are making waves with their second release, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN, an ambitious, passionate rock album.

Over coffee at a nondescript LI diner, the guys, their razor-sharp wit at the ready, let me in on all things WEIH (as well as some pretty fucked up stories, mostly involving poor, dear Austin, that "magnet for wackiness" (none of which, unfortunately, are printed here)).

SKRATCH: Is "Moxie" based on something real?

SERGEI: Well, pretty much "Moxie" is just when you go to shows and everybody is just so full of shit, basically. Everyone's coming up, "Oh man, I love your band. I wanna get on a show with you," and then you never hear from them again; or you may go see them play, [but] they never come see you. You never really know who's telling you the truth, and [the song is] just saying, "You got a lot of moxie, man, you got a lot of pluck." You know, the whole thing, it was kinda just being smart-ass.

AUSTIN: You got sass.

SERGEI: Then I just like the word.

SKRATCH: And about that song, Sean was saying it was on a CMJ comp.

SEAN: Yeah, in June of 2002, they had a little thing about LI in it, and our song was chosen to be on it; and I guess kind of represents the area somewhat. And they did like a whole spread about what's going on here, which was great, because that was before Brand New blew up and before Taking Back Sunday was super huge. So, like, a lot of the media was still kind of largely ignoring what was going on here-not to say that what was going on here was so amazing it warranted media attention, but it was getting a lot bigger faster.

LOU: Most things that go on anywhere don't deserve media attention, like half this crap going on anywhere. Who cares about who Justin Timberlake is dating? I don't give a fuck.

AUSTIN: I do.

LOU: It's worthless information, but yet the media's all over it. They're like, "Oh, he's wearing this shirt today, buying a cup of coffee...."

AUSTIN: I care.

LOU: Who cares?! I don't even care how he made his record.

SEAN: He cares.

AUSTIN: I do.

LOU: Yeah, but you, like I said before, are a huge retard.

[Group laughter]

SEAN: I'm sorry. You were saying?

SKRATCH: What's the best part about your live show?

LOU: Oh, definitely me. [Collective laughter] It's gotta be me.

SEAN: He'll have the Bombay Sapphire and tonic and not even [be] staggering, just like 100% rock solid.

SERGEI: I think it's really just like at times there are these really silly moments. Like, I have this habit of doing high kicks right in Sean's face. 'Cause I'll just look over, and he's looking down, and I'll walk over, and I...[He's] just like, "Ooooh, what are you doing right now?" Next thing you know, there's a foot like...

SEAN: ...Past your nose. It's like, "Whoa!"

SERGEI: It was pretty much a standard that at the beginning of "Moxie": a foot would fly right into his face. And just cause it's such a stupid '80s rock antic, to be like "Wahhh," so, I mean...

AUSTIN: It's a genius '80s rock antic.

SEAN: And just to explain why he has the ability to do this in the first place: we did a Halloween show as a Van Halen cover band doing David Lee Roth-era Van Halen songs, playing, like, "Unchained"...

SERGEI: I had a pink suit on. It was hot.

AUSTIN: ..."Panama"...

SEAN: And he came out as David Lee Roth, and he did like split kicks in mid-air, and you know...

SERGEI: A lot of stretching; very painful.

SEAN: ...Kung fu kicks and everything.

SKRATCH: When was this?

SERGEI: It was October of last year, like a week before Halloween. It was so silly.

SEAN: I couldn't do the Van Halen guitar parts, so our buddy John (who helped us record) sat in on guitar, and I played bass for that show.

SERGEI: However, you did look sick as Michael Anthony.

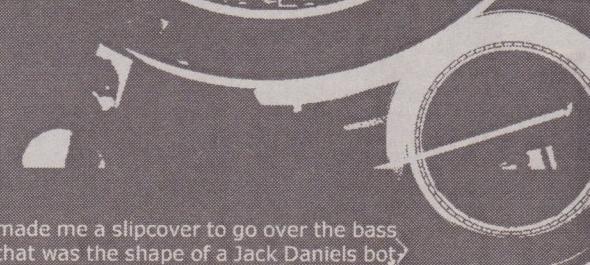
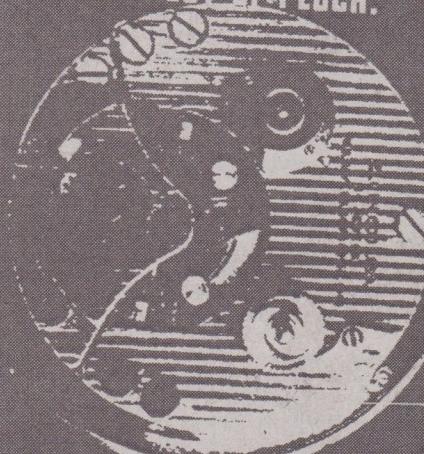
SEAN: [Motioning to Lou] I have to give 95% of the credit to this man right here, because he actually...

LOU: ...Gave you the clothing.

SEAN: Michael Anthony had a bass that was actually shaped like a Jack Daniels bottle. He

WITHEVERYIDLEHOUR

YOU GOT A LOT OF
MOXIE, MAN,
YOU GOT A LOT OF PLUCK.



made me a slipcover to go over the bass that was the shape of a Jack Daniels bottle, so it looked pretty sick-except that halfway through the set it was falling off.

SERGEI: No, the best part was the mullet, though. That was sweet.

SKRATCH: Who had a mullet?

SEAN: All of us.

SERGEI: No, not me, man: I had flowing blonde locks.

SEAN: [Pointing to Austin] He definitely had a mullet. As Alex Van Halen, he definitely had a mullet and scary sunglasses and a headband.

LOU: [Laughs] A shirt that said "Holy Davidson Jesus Christ."

SKRATCH: [Laughter] How would you describe your sound?

SEAN: High jinx. Melodic hard rock with a pretty decent sense of humor. Lou, you wanna weigh in here? 'cause I think you'll probably have the most genius thing to say at this point.

LOU: Genius.

AUSTIN: Cheesy polka.

LOU: Oh no, Austin lost us. [Laughter] That's all I have to say about it.

SERGEI: I don't know. To me, it's just rock music. I know at this point it even sounds cheesy just to say that, 'cause everyone's trying to... You know, it's like the whole emo stereotype, but and not to insult any of the emo bands... I don't know. I just don't really try to whine... not too much. Yeah, I mean, when we write the songs, we don't really try to think about who will like it; we don't try to think what shows we can get on by playing this style of music. We really just write the song, and if people like it, that's great; and if they don't, that's cool too. You can't really please everybody.

LOU: It's not AS cool. [Laughs]

SERGEI: It's not as cool, but then, you know, then you're lonely.

AUSTIN: [Sternly] We're out to please ourselves. [Group laughter]

LOU: Don't worry-I'll please you tonight.
[...]

SKRATCH: Despite all the sarcasm (or because of it?), it's obvious you guys are close. Can you imagine playing with anyone else? You said you got rid of the bass player, but if someone else were to leave...?

SEAN: I

think at this point we'd still be friends if anyone were to leave.

SERGEI: I've known Austin since first grade, you know? Sean I knew because...

SEAN: I went to school with all their older brothers, so it's like I knew them first as acquaintances just because they were their brothers' brothers, but then it was like I stopped hanging out with their brothers and started spending more time with them as we became a band.

SERGEI: Lou we've known for like five years now, and it's just that you can't not love this guy.

LOU: You can, [but] it's not wise. [Laughs]

SERGEI: But even Lou...I mean, Lou plays full-time in On the Might of Princes; he plays guitar, and he's amazing. It's, like, eventually he's going off to Europe, like in April and doing tours like that, so we know eventually we're gonna have to have somebody.

LOU: Yeah, but I'll always come back.

SERGEI: He's like a little puppy. [Laughter]

LOU: And usually it's a little bit early! [Much laughter]

S E A N :
U s u a l l y
a g a i n s t h i s w i l l .

SERGEI: Yeah, he'll say, "I got there, and Europe explod-

ed! I don't know what happened! It just wasn't there. It was a big pothole."

SEAN: Some sort of transportation mishap.

SERGEI: No, but I think at this point, even if Lou just couldn't do it anymore, we'd always consider Lou a part of this band. He did so much for us, just as a friend, and it made it actually fun to play music again, because it wasn't, "Oh, I have to go to practice again. Who's gonna get into a fight this week?" In the last two years, we became much closer as friends.

SEAN: It was almost like starting over again; that novelty was there. It was just super fun to go to practice.

SERGEI: It was like when Lisa Bonet left THE COSBY SHOW: [...] things were new, things were fresh.

SEAN: Anyway, we could definitely play with other people, but as far as an opportunity presenting itself and us being like, "Oh, fuck you-I'm going with these guys," that wouldn't happen...I don't think. Maybe this guy-I don't know.

AUSTIN: What?

SEAN: [Laughter] The second an opening pops up in an established band, you're phewww-gone.

AUSTIN: Oh, I'm flighty, huh?

SEAN: Like a 747.

LOU: But a hot 747.

Keep checking www.withtheeveryidlehour.com for updates and gig info.

BAD RELIGION

THE EMPIRE STRIKES FIRST

Epitaph
6.8.2004

A Fall Farewell
By Ryan Pangilinan

If there's one thing I hate, it's lying. For most of my adolescence, I watched shows like SAVED BY THE BELL and BEVERLY HILLS 90210 thinking that's what Southern California life was really like. Then recently (while watching THE O.C., no less), I was asked to interview A Fall Farewell, a rock band from California. These guys are much harsher than that stupid band California Dreams...and they're not liars.

In an interview that rivals all e-mail interviews to date, Jason Gallup (vocals), Bret Hudzietz (drums), Daniel Cardoza, and Brian Eikenberry (guitars) (bassist Scott Kulek was absent) typed their awesome answers to SKRATCH's metalriffic questions.

SKRATCH: How did you choose the name "A Fall Farewell"?

JASON: It's an acronym for "A Failed Attempt at Limiting Lost Foreign Aid to Recovering Entities with Extremist Loveless Leaders."

DANIEL: No, really, I swear it has a meaning.

SKRATCH: In the interest of genre-defining geeks, how would you define your sound? It seems as your feet are planted equally on both metal and hardcore.

JASON: I think it's much easier to write music you feel at the moment and to be told what your genre is rather than pigeonhole yourself.

SKRATCH: How would you describe the songwriting process?

BRET: Usually, one of us will have basic riffs in mind, maybe a little chord progression, and then we'll get together, jam it out and see what comes of it. Other times, one of us pretty much has a whole song they've written, and then we just work through the kinks.

Basically, it's a group effort, and it wouldn't work without all five of us.

SKRATCH: What are your influences (collectively or individually)?

DANIEL: Booze and chicks, booze and chicks.

BRIAN: And Yngwie Malmsteen!

BRET: I'd say as a whole some of our biggest influences are Thrice, Botch, and Radiohead (among others). Seeing Thrice start up four or five years ago and watching them grow both musically and as a band inspired all of us to try and make music a big part of our lives. Botch is one of greatest hardcore bands that ever lived, and their unique mix of off-time key signatures and powerful progressions have always rubbed off when we're trying to write. Radiohead just shows us that it can be beneficial to constantly experiment with your sound and not try and be stuck to one certain genre.

SKRATCH: You worked with Teppei Teranishi on your demo. What was that like? Did he offer any insights that added more strength to your music?

DANIEL: It was our first real time in the studio (besides a small, two-song demo previously), so it taught us a lot about the whole studio process and how to be ready the next time we went in to record. Thrice had previously recorded at this studio, and Teppei had been working there ever since, so he was pretty in tune with everything going on. He was really cool about the whole process. We'd stay up until 2 a.m. recording, sleep in the studio, then wake up and do it again. Oh yeah, and Bret shit his pants while he was recording his drum tracks.

SKRATCH: Do you currently have any more plans to record again?

BRET: We're shooting to record a full-length by June. We've also talked to a few labels about putting the record out, but we'll know more about that later.

SKRATCH: What has been your favorite show or band that you've played with?

BRET: I think we'd all agree by saying our favorite show to date was last month at the Glasshouse in Pomona with Avenged Sevenfold, Saosin, and Moments in Grace. It was amazing to have the chance to play in front of so many people and with such awesome bands. But then again, some of our best shows have also been small base-

ment shows on tour. One of the best ever was our first tour in 2002 in a basement in St. Louis. The ceiling fell down.

SKRATCH: Do you have any plans to do bigger tours?

BRET: We are definitely interested in doing bigger tours. If we had the opportunity, we would take this full-time if we got the chance to tour with bigger acts, etc. Right now we're just busy playing local shows with touring bands, gaining friends here and there. After we release our full-length we should be getting on some bigger tours.

SKRATCH: What are you listening to at the moment?

DANIEL: We all have a huge variety in what we listen to. Right now that could be anything from Thrice to Isis to Outkast to The Postal Service to Killswitch Engage to Coheed & Cambria, then back to some more Isis then switch it up with some Atmosphere, then maybe end it with Jimmy Eat World's CLARITY. We're all over the place. Deciding on music while we're on tour is one of the hardest things to do.

SKRATCH: What are your goals with AFF? What do you hope to accomplish?

BRET: We've accomplished just about all of the goals that we had when the band first started. When we started, all I wanted to do was get on a show at Chain Reaction, and it's basically escalated from there. It's good to keep making new goals for yourself all the time—it's what keeps you going—but sometimes it also keeps you from enjoying what you've done. We're willing to take this as far as we can, and we'll keep doing it as long as people are willing to listen.

A Fall Farewell's debut EP, THE IMPERMANENCE OF BEAUTY, is available through Interpunk.com. You can also download some new demos at hxcmp3.com/afall-farewell.

"We'd stay up until 2 a.m. recording, sleep in the studio, then wake up and do it again. Oh yeah, and Bret shit his pants while he was recording his drum tracks!"

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Broken Bottles

By Jeinelle Jones

Seriously, Broken Bottles has created one of my favorite new albums. IN THE BOTTLES (on TKO) is packed with catchy yet dark, old-school-sounding punk straight outta Orange County. Speaking with singer/guitarist/main songwriter Jes the Mess was a blast, and hopefully these guys, guitarist Darren, drummer Drew, and bassist Travis will get what they deserve. Actually, things are looking good: they revealed they were recently featured on the CMT radio station. Anyway, openly conversing about many interesting subjects, there was one topic I quickly learned was off-limits: Kelly Osbourne.

JES: Okay, go.

SKRATCH: All right. First, with your record, the music is kind of dark, and your subject matter isn't really that serious. What do you feel is the overall tone of the record?

JES: A little pessimistic. [Businesslike] Okay, so what's the next one?

SKRATCH: Just again, with the lyrics...like Pink Swastika. You write most of the lyrics?

JES: I wrote everything.

SKRATCH: What sparked that song?

JES: That was an idea I had because, where I live (here in Orange County), I saw a lot of sort of racist activity at certain hardcore events you know, musical performances and I basically wanted to retaliate with music: insulting the swastika and insulting your belief as a racist or whatever, and also people trying to be hard-ass, like tough guys. I don't know what their deal is. Sometimes I don't know if they know what they're doing or whatever, but I just saw a problem with it kind of fucking up the scene. So it's like, why not insult them?

SKRATCH: Yeah. Overall, can you talk about IN THE BOTTLES a little bit? You wrote all the music, too?

JES: Yeah, I came up with all the words and the music. I wrote some of the songs probably when I was like 18, and I hold on to things for years and change things up and then re-change and then go back and add words and sort of get everything all lined up, fixed up until it's the final product. And I just waited for 12 songs so that I could put six songs on one side of the record and six songs on the other side [] you know, like on a record player. And came up with a couple ideas while we were recording and had Kenny Martinez from U.S. Borbs and Shattered Faith produce and [bring] in his musical taste, because he has a similar taste in rock music, I think. And then we just recorded it at Adamo in Westminster and put it out on TKO Records.

SKRATCH: So how did you get to work with Kenny?

JES: My manager [Wade W Alston], who was in the movie SUBURBIA as Joe Schmo [], he played bass in the U.S. Borbs and mentioned something to Kenny, and all the sudden we were playing with Spencer [Bartsch] from a band called The Main. He was the singer of Shattered Faith, and we basically wanted him to produce it, because Wade was...I kinda pissed him off, cause he would come in and I'd be drinking or whatever, and he wanted to help out, but things were kinda sloppy. And then eventually I just kinda cleaned up and then pissed off Kenny a little bit. But eventually I cleaned up, I swear!

SKRATCH: A couple of the songs you released previously, like Gothic Chicks.

JES: Yeah. Originally I just recorded that in a day. I didn't like, tire it like, I tire by ear, and it wasn't in E. And then I gave it to Hostage [Records], and they put it on Rodney on the RQ and we were excited. [] I came up with that I think [when I was] around 21...no, about 20 years old. And I just had a lot of time on my hands, and it was the first song I tried to write for the new band we were creating.

SKRATCH: One thing I said before: the songs are kind of dark-sounding. JES: I'm a great guy.

SKRATCH: What? [Laughs]

JES: It's just that the whole world is kind of negative.

SKRATCH: No, but I like that, so that's a good thing.

JES: Oh, okay, but just don't hurt yourself or anybody else. It's dark because the world around me has been cruel. It's a cruel world, and I just had to write the record. It was kind of a little bit closer to the way things are. Not everybody's music is like that, but I'm getting more positive. I wanna put it in a positive

SKRATCH: When I say dark, I'm talking about the actual instrumentation. You know what I'm saying?

JES: The music. See, that's how my first band was, cause I try to aim for that and then turn it around by making kind of humorous lyrics to it. Yeah, aimed for you to need to be on Prozac if you listen to the record or the music or whatever, so that's why.

SKRATCH: Other than the line in the song Kelly Osbourne: I'm in the Bottles. Is that where you get the album title?

JES: Right. [] IN THE BOTTLES is short for the Bottles and short for Broken Bottles, and I just wanted to make it stand out a little more. There's actually another version of the song.

SKRATCH: That you released before.

JES: Yes, on a record before that, called NOT PRETTY on Finger Records. [] But I really can't go deep into the Kelly. You know, my attorney said not to make any comments.

SKRATCH: Compared to your other releases, do you feel IN THE BOTTLES is a change at all?

JES: Things have gotten more mature along the way, I can tell you that. I mean, emotionally, I haven't grown as much, but I can tell that we've tuned. We bought tuners...although mine was not working at the time. But Travis has one, and Darren. But I can tell. From the beginning, it was [trashier]. Some people are aiming for that kind of thing. Things are starting to clean up as I clean up.

SKRATCH: Personally?

JES: Personally, yeah, and musically. It kind of went hand-in-hand.

SKRATCH: And the full-length, you're happy with it overall?

JES: Yeah, I actually enjoy the 12 []. It was the first full-length I got to put out ever.

SKRATCH: How was it making the video for Drinking in the Rain?

JES: That was fun. We went in there and just kinda hung around and had fun. They just put a camera on you all the time. I wanted to add more stuff to it, but this girl...I was trying to get some girl to show up, and she wouldn't show up. And then Darren didn't show up for the next photo shoot, and then I called the guy on the phone and said, Please, we'll do it another day, but it never happened, so whatever they put on there, we just kinda ended up with. But it came out good, it looks all right.

SKRATCH: What are your goals now?

JES: For the band? TOUR and play music. See, this guy...you know the guitarist Darren Sullivan? His goal...like, he just said right now: Sell out. I'm kind of not for that. I just wanna have fun like Cyndi Lauper, but I'm a boy not a girl. And that's what I'm trying to do, actually, is just have fun. That's my goal: go on tour and find out what's going on in other parts, and then have fun [...].

SKRATCH: Yeah, and that's how you started out, I guess?

JES: No, that's what I'm trying to do right now.

S K R A T C H: Right, and that's how it started out, too, right? That's what you wanted?

JES: Yeah, how I started out was [sheepishly] yeah, basically the same. Yeah, you're right. It just seems that at the beginning I didn't really know what I was doing. I kinda set it up, cause a lot of the bands just play in bars and, you know, kinda like three fat, old, 30-year-old guys come there and are like, Hey, baby, look at me, and they drink a beer; but I just kinda set it up for bar music, like a bar punk band, another bar band. But eventually I figured out... I looked around, and I'm like, Wow, we can just stay in the bar and be a bar band, or we can venture out and try to go other places. And that's where I'm at.

S K R A T C H: What is Broken Bottles greatest asset?

JES: Me. I'm a lover, not a fighter.

S K R A T C H: Last question. Don't even think about it. Just say something: Broken Bones or Broken Heroes?

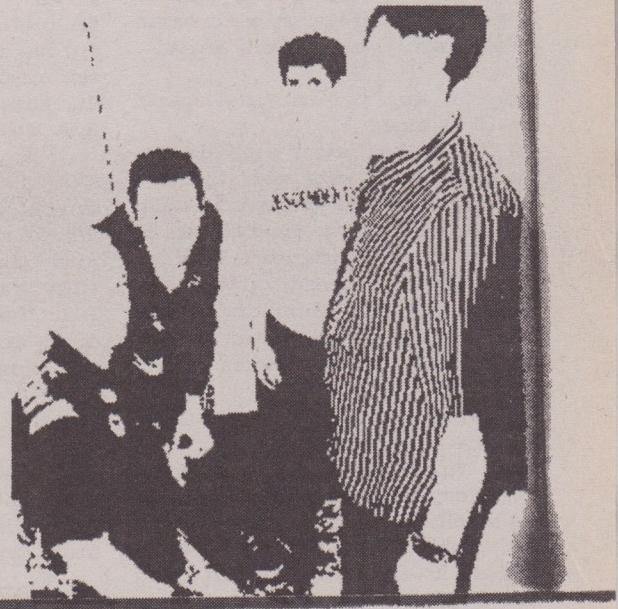
JES: Broken Bones.

S K R A T C H: All right.

JES: All the way.

Some major touring is planned for 2004 (info at), including dates on the West Coast and Europe with The Stitches. Should be cool. But come on, guys, get your asses to NYC quick!

"I just wanna have fun like Cyndi Lauper, but I'm a boy not a girl. And that's what I'm trying to do, actually, is just have fun."



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GRABASS CHARLESTONS

By Janelle Jones

Gainesville, FL, trio Grabass Charlestons (vocalist/drummer Will, bassist Dave, and guitarist RJ) are quickly gaining momentum with their debut album, THE GREATEST STORY EVER HULA'D (No Idea Records). Quite the characters, these guys are refreshingly upbeat, down-to-earth, and unlike many bands don't take themselves too seriously. Playing raw, energetic punk rock highlighted by thoughtful lyrics, they strike the perfect balance between fun and substance a feat not easily achieved.

SKRATCH: About the record, can you go over some of its themes?

WILL: [...] I guess I sort of write about whatever I'm moved to write about, whatever's around me, if it's kinda funny or ridiculous or depressing...you know, makes me mad or whatever. I guess with this record a lot of it's actually almost embarrassingly personal, but kinda to a large degree written out like kinda personal self-therapy or whatever. Yeah, it's [influenced by] whatever's around us.

SKRATCH: I noticed you have some songs about how dehumanizing work can be.

WILL: Yup, that's true, 'cause I've worked some pretty dehumanizing jobs, you know? And actually, I wrote a lot of these lyrics at work, 'cause I had this job for a really long time, and it was pretty menial. I was working at a kitchen in a restaurant, and I'd just sit by myself doing crappy shit-work all day. I wrote most of the lyrics there, so I guess I kinda have that restaurant to thank for that.

SKRATCH: Your lyrics are serious, but your music is catchy and fun. Do you think that takes away at all from how people view the band?

WILL: I don't know. The lyrics are just kinda lyrics that are written; the music, we just kinda write and play the music that we wanna hear. I don't think it takes away from it. I don't really care if it does or if it doesn't. I'm not worried about people overlooking the seriousness of the lyrics. I mean, as serious as the lyrics may seem, I don't really take myself that seriously—nor do I take whatever we create all that seriously. [Laughs] I don't know. It's kind of annoying when people take themselves too seriously or take any band too seriously.

D AVE: Yeah, if the music wasn't fun, then I wouldn't wanna listen to it and I wouldn't wanna play it; and yet, if the lyrics weren't somewhat thought-provoking, I wouldn't be interested, either. It's a yin-yang situation.

RJ: The combination is really good.

SKRATCH: What made you decide to cover "Cold, Cold Ground"?

WILL: It's just a really great song. The first time I heard it, it really, really moved me. Pretty much immediately I was like, "Damn, I wanna cover that song." Plus, it's like The Ramones did a Tom Waits song, and I love The Ramones, so I was like, "If The Ramones can do it and they can sound really awesome, maybe we can do it, too."

GRABASS CHARLESTONS

RJ:

It was fun to take a song like that that's really slow and then turn it into a more Grabass Charlestons type of song faster and more our style. It was fun to do that.

SKRATCH: [Laughing] I don't even know the band that well, but you know Lawrence Arms? They have a record that's titled somewhat like yours [i.e., GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD]. It's totally a coincidence?

WILL: Yeah, it totally is a coincidence. We actually thought of the title for [our] record I think before any of us...I don't know, before I had ever even heard of them.

EJ: Yeah, I had never heard of Lawrence Arms before that.

WILL: So yeah, it's a total coincidence.

EJ: We talked about it with them one time. They realized we had similar names. They thought ours was better.

SKRATCH: Looking back at the album, is there anything you'd wanna change?

WILL: [Stemly] The album is perfect. No, I mean, you can always make things better. I would like to go back and re-record it now, knowing what we know now. I'd be lying if I ever said I listen to it and don't wince in fuckin' disgust every now and then.

EJ: We've definitely learned a lot about recording and stuff since then, so we would definitely record it better if we did it now, but I think we're all happy with it.

WILL: Yeah, I think it's a pretty good document as to where we were at the time. I think it's good.

SKRATCH: So you guys have basically all the material for your next album?

EJ: Yes, basically.

SKRATCH: Are you playing any of the songs live yet?

EJ: Yes. We've been playing them for a while now. THE GREATEST STORY EVER HULA'D we recorded over a year ago, so we had a lot of new stuff, and we've been playing it live for a while.

SKRATCH: How does it compare?

WILL: I'm pretty confident it's the best stuff we have to date. I'm really excited about it. I'm really proud of it. I guess some of the songs are a little slower, but I don't think it's a drastic departure from what we've been doing. But a lot of the songs are a little more developed or whatever, a little more complete. And we have some kind of slower tunes, but we also got a lot of fun, rocking fast stuff on it, too. I'm real-

we will fill your

HEAD
with more knowledge
1 by about the sport of jai-alai than
you can imagine.

excited about it.

EJ: We pretty much just finished a demo of all the new songs at our friend's house. It's coming out really good.

SKRATCH: For people who haven't seen you guys live, what's an incentive to come out and see ya?

D AVE: We all weigh 400 pounds.

EJ: You can buy us a drink.

WILL: Five bucks a head. Everybody gets five dollars. We personally give everybody five dollars.

D AVE: If you come and talk to us, we will fill your head with more knowledge about the sport of jai-alai than you can imagine.

SKRATCH: What?

D AVE: Exactly. Jai-alai. [Spelling it out]

SKRATCH: Okay.

WILL: Yup, you can talk to us about that. Plus, you can laugh at us or laugh with us.

EJ: You never heard of jai-alai, seriously?

SKRATCH: I've seen it written before, but never knew how to pronounce it.

WILL: But as far as live, we're not like a band that's perfect every time. Yeah, we've been known to have some off-key singing or drum fuck ups here and there. I think we got the sort of humility and passion that makes it rock. [That] makes it a lot of fun for us and everybody else, hopefully.

SKRATCH: You guys have a different set up: usually you don't see the drummer singing. Why do you think that is?

WILL: I don't know. I just saw the infomercial for the box set of the Hotel California band. They had a drummer-singer.

EJ: I think it's probably 'cause playing drums and singing is really hard. Most people can't

seen to do it, but Will seems to be able to do it just fine.

SKRATCH: Other than that, what differentiates you guys from other bands?

EJ: We obviously don't take ourselves too seriously which I think could be a really good thing.

WILL: Our van is a lot shorter than most people's vans; it's really small. Unlike most bands, we use the guitar/drums/bass format. Oh, wait a minute—a lot of bands use that!

D AVE: I play through a gray amp, and a lot of people make fun of me for that, but I like it.

EJ: We like to play cards.

WILL: We're unusually obsessed with Husker Du. [] That's kind of a hard question.

D AVE: We like

each other. We're still friends.

WILL: I guess we could say we're better than every other band in the world, but then we'd really sound like assholes.

D AVE: Yeah, if you were just to read that, you wouldn't understand how funny it was when we said it; but if you heard us say it, then you think it's funny.

SKRATCH: All right. What IS a Grabass Charleston?!

RJ: I think we're the Grabass Charlestons.

SKRATCH: Right, but [Laughs]

WILL: That's the most thought-provoking question anybody's ever asked us.

WILL: You mean how'd the name come about?

SKRATCH: No, just what is it? Give a definition. And you can't say, "Us."

D AVE: If we could photograph it?

WILL: I don't know. A thousand naked men? No, not really. That doesn't sound right.

SKRATCH: So you don't know?

EJ: A drunk guy at the Super Bowl of jai-alai.

WILL: I think I'm gonna go out to the desert and meditate over that one the next couple of months and smoke a bunch of peyote and come back with an answer.

SKRATCH: I'll be waiting for that then.

EJ: All right. We got your number.



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THE HURT PROCESS

THE HURT PROCESS
By Jason Schreurs

Bands like The Hurt Process are everywhere these days. It doesn't matter where you're living; chances are some scuff-y-looking dudes near you are pounding out the emo, the screamo, the extremo you know, basically the culmination of hardcore, metal, and pop. But there's a difference between the songs on DRIVE BY MONOLOGUE, this U.K. band's debut full-length on Victory Records, and those of other bands slogging away at the heavy/soft. The Hurt Process has the uncanny ability to perfectly balance melody with power, writing songs that instantly etch themselves into your psyche. Think along the lines of Thursday, Byetssfire, and Thrice (yes, think that good). The first U.K. band to play the Warped Tour, The Hurt Process hopes to make an impression on American audiences this summer with their controlled fury.

Dan Lawrence, one of the band's two singers, recently chatted with me via e-mail.

SKRATCH: The Hurt Process does a great job of balancing the heavy and melodic. How does that work when writing your songs. Is it just depending on the mood of the band when you are coming up with new stuff?

DAN: Generally it's got nothing to do with the mood of the band. We all listen to heavy music and melodic music, so to us it's just kind of natural for our songs to turn out the way they do. Our new stuff is way heavier, yet way more melodic.

SKRATCH: The band doesn't really delve too deeply into the metalcore sound, but you do have elements of that genre. Personally, I'm getting really tired of bands doing the 1,000 mph, heaviest, easiest band in the world thing. What are your thoughts on the metalcore stuff?

DAN: For me, metalcore is ace. I'm more of a fan of the breakdowns, as opposed to the 1,000 mph stuff. I know what you mean, though: there are way too many bands coming out doing the same thing in metalcore and emo. We just try and mix everything and try to create our own niche.

SKRATCH: Track 2, "White Butterflies," is a standout track for me. What is it about? Tell me about the process of writing that one.

DAN: Well, it's really clichéd and been done before, but it's about relationships breaking up. Basically, imagine when your girl leaves you for someone else (who you either know or don't know), saying that she loves you and whatever...it

hurts, yeah? Well, the "sky bleeding white butterflies" is basically how you feel like everything is falling down around you and the heartache you have is so bad, it feels like you've been stabbed. I wrote the chorus lyrics to this when my ex left me for a close friend. Tom [guitars] had an ace clean riff at the time, and we put the two together. I wanted it to be really aggressive because of the way I was feeling. That's where the heavy verses come from.

SKRATCH: Were there any songs on this album that you considered not including, that maybe they didn't quite fit or something? Also, were there any songs that didn't make the cut, and why weren't they included?

DAN: [Thinking hard] Well we were going to include a couple of songs from our first EP on the album, but, to be honest, they didn't fit with the other songs. We all decided on that before we flew to L.A. to do the record. Apart from that, all the other songs were on the record from the day they were written.

SKRATCH: Tell me a little about the hardcore scene in the U.K.

DAN: Now is the first time we have had any sort of scene that matches the American scene. There is a massive buzz. It's amazing. U.K. bands are blowing some of U.S.A.'s finest away, which is awesome. But also there is a lot of networking between bands transatlantic style, rather than just within the U.K. I mean, Funeral for a Friend who are great friends of ours just released their EP on Renet and toured Europe with Iron Maiden. How cool is that? And they are just an emo band from Wales! I'm so glad to be part of it. It's so cool.

SKRATCH: How is it different in the U.K. than the scene over here?

DAN: To be honest, I don't think it is that different now. I know that the metalcore stuff in the U.S. is bigger than it is here. We only have a few bands who are doing that type of thing. But if you're talking emo/extremo/emo/whatever you want to call it, I think we are easily on par. The shows are getting bigger for all bands, and Funeral for a Friend entered the Top 20 singles chart here twice in two months. It's going crazy.

SKRATCH: I've noticed that European bands often have this U.S. complex, where they copy North American styles. Now, you guys have retained some originality, but you are obviously influenced by some American bands, too.

DAN: Of course we are influenced by U.S. bands;

it's natural. If they make good music, then we will listen to them. But I know what you're saying. It's difficult to dress individually or sound individual nowadays everything has been done! It just so happens that North America produces some really cool bands. We'll never everyday that.

SKRATCH: What bands made The Hurt Process possible? If certain bands didn't exist, I'm sure your sound would be different. What are those bands, and which of their elements did you incorporate?

DAN: For me, bands like Earth Crisis, Deftones, Metallica, and Queen all had huge influences on me. For the rest of the band, everything from Helmet, Queens of the Stone Age, and Jimmy Eat World to Stratovarius, Testament, and Slayer to Polvo, Casket Lottery. To be honest, the list of bands that influenced us is endless. We all listen to different things, and it shows in our music. We try and incorporate everyone's influences, so everyone is happy!

SKRATCH: Victory Records is putting you as the first U.K. band to play the Warped Tour. I was just wondering if you guys care about that and if there's any added pressure because of it.

DAN: [Big, big grin] It's an absolute honor to be the first U.K. band to do the Warped Tour. We're really looking forward to it. To be honest, it is going to be the biggest thing The Hurt Process has ever done. I think we do feel a bit of pressure, mainly because it is the biggest thing we've done and because if it goes well and the kids dig it, it might open up for other U.K. bands to do the tour in the future, which would be amazing. Who knows? We might be asked back to headline, if we are lucky!

SKRATCH: What's your opinion on Christian hardcore bands? Should people care about a band's belief system?

DAN: In four words: I love Norma Jean! We toured with them in the U.K., and it totally changed my views on Christian hardcore. I, personally, [am not Christian] and was worried they would try and convert me, but they didn't. These guys didn't preach, but they made it clear they believed, which was awesome. And every night they went onstage and blew everybody into the next city. It was amazing. I personally respect people who believe in something that much. If people don't want to believe themselves, then they should at least respect others who do and not quiz them every five minutes about why God does or doesn't exist. Just leave it, get on with your own lives, and listen to music.

SKRATCH: Should hardcore be political?

DAN: I think hardcore should be about what is important to you, whether it be Christianity, Satanism, day-to-day life, cars, sports, whatever. If politics are that important to you, then go for it: sing about them.

SKRATCH: Living under Tony Blair must be pretty nerve-wracking sometimes. What is the political climate in your country, especially during this ongoing "War on Terrorism" that your country has been so instrumental in?

DAN: I don't think it's down to whose country has been instrumental in what, I think it's down to Tony Blair and George W. Bush being instrumental in the whole "War on Terrorism" thing. The guy [i.e., Blair] is a complete prick and should never have been elected leader. He knows nothing, he's annoying, and he is more worried about how much money he has in his back pocket than anything else. In the U.K., we have a problem with asylum-seekers and illegal immigrants. Now Tony Blair would rather give these people money than house his own home-

less U.K. residents who are on the streets a lot of the time through no fault of their own, but because they can't afford to pay the ludicrous taxes in this country. How savage is that?! So, I guess you could say that the U.K. political climate is in a very, very bad way.

SKRATCH: Anything else you want to talk about?

DAN: Hopefully, people reading this will check us out. We will always talk to people at shows and ask their honest opinion, so if you care and see us on the Warped Tour, find one of us and have some fun. Cheers.

Check out The Hurt Process on tour in the U.K. with Taking Back Sunday June 7-13 or on West Coast U.S. Warped Tour July 1-13. For more info on the band, hit their website at www.thehurtprocess.com.



I THINK HARDCORE SHOULD BE ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU WHETHER IT BE CHRISTIANITY, SATANISM, DAY-TO-DAY LIFE, CARS, SPORTS, WHATEVER. IF POLITICS ARE THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU, THEN GO FOR IT, SING ABOUT THEM.

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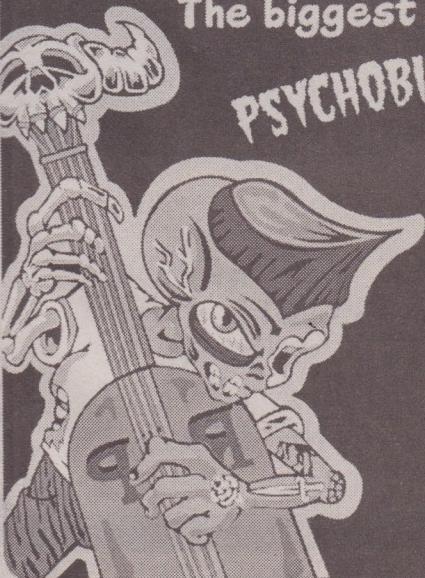
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Misconduct

MISCONDUCT
Interview by Janelle Jones
Photo by Marielle Carlson

With their infectious brand of thought-provoking, positive hardcore, Sweden's Misconduct demolish all. For proof, just check out the four-piece's latest full-length, UNITED AS ONE. Characterized by fist-pumping sing-along choruses and tight melodies, this isn't wimpy emo/screamo shit. Bringing back the old-school sound since '95, Misconduct infuse every single anthem with tons of energy-and, most of all, heart.

Via e-mail (hey, calling Sweden's expensive!), vocalist and sole founding member Fredrik Olsson showed off his masterful English skills while discussing all facets of the band, their new record, their label (Side by Side Records), and what they have in store for 2004.

SKRATCH: Briefly, how did the current lineup come about?

FRED: In 2000, after the recording of the ONE LAST TRY album, we took a bit of a break with the band. Our guitarist Martin moved to Stockholm, and Dan (our bass player) began to study at the university. Me and Matt (our drummer) recruited Olli Karlsson on guitar and Andreas Wall on bass. Olli and Andreas were at that time already playing together with me in one of my punk bands.

Together, we toured Europe and North America in 2002. After the summer in 2002, Matt became a father for the second time and had to take care of his family. Our old friend and stand-in drummer Daniel Ekstrom joined the band as Misconduct's new permanent drummer.

SKRATCH: You have a big old-school hardcore sound. Who have been some of your major influences over the years?

FRED: For us, it was mainly three bands: Minor Threat, Youth of Today, and Gorilla Biscuits. All three meant a lot, but Gorilla Biscuits was definitely the band that influenced us the most with their positive and melodic hardcore.

SKRATCH: To me, your sound can be described as Agnostic Front meets H2O, as you have that tough hardcore sound but also with a great deal of melody. Is this a valid assessment? If not, feel free to correct me! How would you personally describe Misconduct's sound?

FRED: Sure, I guess it's actually a very good description of the Misconduct sound.

SKRATCH: On your new record UNITED AS ONE, some topics you sing about are unity and friendship. What other themes are discussed on the album?

FRED: For example, one of the songs is about the environment and how mankind is mistreating Mother Earth. In another song, we talk about separation and the feeling that

you don't belong. We also have songs about believing in yourself, keeping your dreams alive and how anyone can make a difference in the world.

SKRATCH: You have a politically-charged song ("Stop the Fight"). Can you talk about this song and your feelings behind it?

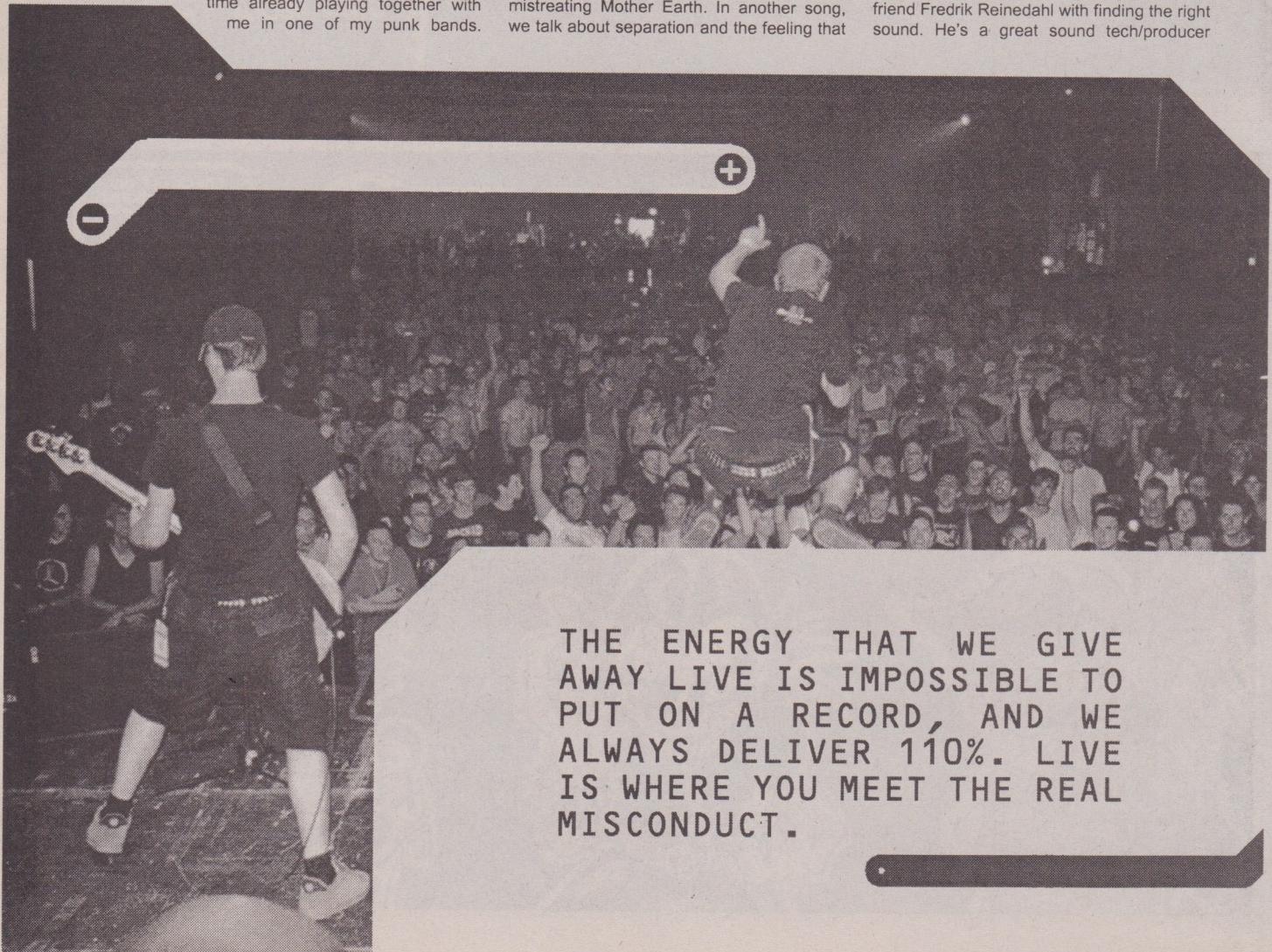
FRED: The song "Stop the Fight" reflects all the terrible things that have been happening in our world the past couple of years. We've been experiencing terror attacks, wars, shoot-outs in schools, major pollution, etc. Wherever you've been turning your head, [you see that] our world has been bleeding. I really hope that we as humans will change our values and take our responsibility towards each other and planet Earth, 'cause if we go on like this, we will soon have no planet to walk on.

SKRATCH: How would you describe the overall tone of the record?

FRED: I think UNITED AS ONE is a much more positive record than our previous releases, both musically and lyric-wise.

SKRATCH: How was the recording experience? You pretty much did all the work in the studio yourself, correct? Do you think you'd do it this way again for your next record?

FRED: Yes, it's true that I did most of the work myself producing on UNITED AS ONE, but we also got a lot of help from our old friend Fredrik Reinedahl with finding the right sound. He's a great sound tech/producer



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who has recorded a lot of great Swedish bands like In Flames, Dimension Zero, Burst, Passenger, etc. We were all very focused when we entered Fredrik's studio (Phlat Planet), and I knew exactly how I wanted the record to sound like. Also, the fact that Fredrik and I are old friends and that he has been following Misconduct since the very beginning made it all very easy. I think UNITED AS ONE is the best production we ever made, and I can definitely consider working this way again for our next record.

SKRATCH: What do you hope people come away with after hearing your music?

FRED: For Misconduct, hardcore has always been about friendship. We want to inspire and give people a positive message without forgetting what's going on in our world today.

SKRATCH: The record was released on your own label, Side by Side Records, in Europe. How is your label going? Do you have other bands signed? If so, are they all hardcore, or do they differ in style?

FRED: The label is going great, and the response so far has been totally amazing. First, we released the new album in Europe as a Limited Edition Digi Pack, which sold out this fall. We've just released the standard version in Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark), and in the rest of Europe it'll be released on February the 23rd by U.K. label Golf Records, on license from Side by



Side Records. Right now, we only have one band on Side by Side, but as soon as we are finished with all the work on the new Misconduct album, we are ready to start looking for other bands to join the Side by Side family. We are not only looking for hardcore bands but all styles of alternative music.

SKRATCH: Just saw Sick of It All last night (awesome as always!). You played with them last year. How was that experience? Who would be the act you'd most want to tour with?

FRED: The first time we played together with Sick of It All at the London Astoria was totally amazing. The venue was totally packed. We did a really great show, and we got to see one of the best live bands ever. After SOIA's show, we hung out with them for a while, and they were all really nice guys. The second time we met Sick of It All was this summer in France when we played the Fury Fest in Nantes together with Youth of Today, which was also totally amazing. There are so many great bands out there that we would love to tour with, but if we had to pick one band, I must say Bad Religion. It would be extra special to tour with a band like them that have been around for such a long time.

SKRATCH: Give us an incentive to see Misconduct live. In other words, what can people look forward to when they catch one of your sets?

FRED: The energy that we give away live is

impossible to put on a record, and we always deliver 110%. Live is where you meet the real Misconduct.

SKRATCH: You'll be on tour in Europe and then heading to the U.S. and Canada in April and May. What else do you have planned for 2004?

FRED: During this summer, we will tour in Scandinavia and Europe again, doing mainly summer festivals but also a couple of club shows. After the summer, we will hopefully be touring Australia and Japan. We are also planning to do a sequel to our 1998 vinyl 7" SIGNED IN BLOOD that we will release exclusively on Side by Side some time this year.

SKRATCH: Anything you would like to add in conclusion?

FRED: First of all, THANK A LOT to you, Janelle, for this kick-ass interview. And to all of you out there supporting the punk/hardcore scene: YOU ARE THE REASON WHY WE'RE HERE. Also, be sure to pick up a copy of our NEW album, UNITED AS ONE, and don't forget to visit us at www.misconduct.nu. See YOU ALL in the pit! NO BOUNDARIES!

Yeah, so do as the man says and check out Misconduct's Website. And while you're at it, go see 'em live when they come around.

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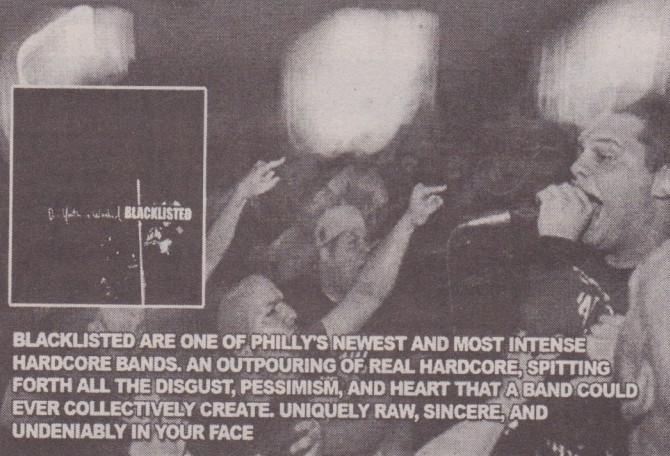
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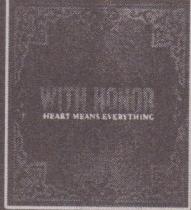
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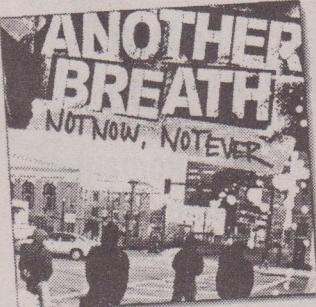


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SHOW REVIEWS

Azure Ray The Elected Neva Dinova

March 12, 2004
@ the North Star Bar (Philadelphia)
Text and photo by Matthew Siblo

While the shockwaves and ripples are still being charted from the great Saddle Creek boom of last year, 2004 thus far has been quite slow going for the Omaha faithful. There isn't seemingly much to look forward to, either: the next Bright Eyes full-length isn't scheduled to hit until Jan. 2005, The Desaparecidos have cancelled all future plans, Cursive has been steadily touring for a year on the same nine songs, and The Faint...well, who knows what the hell The Faint is doing. Needless to say, the mighty Saddle Creek roster is in hibernation mode, with no end in sight. So what happens when all the big guns are on the sidelines? A tour such as this rolls into town to remind us all that, although they may not pack the houses sometimes, even the minor players can create a hit or two.

The night started out with Neva Dinova, a band who despite their Omaha roots is signed to California's Crank! Records. The band possessed a laid-back, atmospheric twang makes it easy to associate them with many of their Midwestern contemporaries. While performing, Jake Bellows and co. was joined on stage by none other than Conor Oberst, as the two previewed a couple of new songs from their forthcoming split, ONE JUG OF WINE, TWO VESSELS. Both parties looked and sounded extremely comfortable, and their unique styles seemed to blend together quite nicely. As is strangely becoming the case with just about every other Omaha band, Neva's set ended with everyone in the room piling on stage holding each other "We Are the World" style. It must be something in the Nebraskan water.

It's always a strange transition from guitarist to lead singer, even if you've tackled some vocal duties previously. Many guitarists suffer from a noticeably large amount of trepidation while making this jump, whether they be in solo efforts, side projects, or otherwise. This sort of apprehension of accepting their new-found role usually leaves the listener with a hollow-sounding recording, mostly bought just because the record can claim it has (ex-) members of whomever. Such is not the case with Rilo Kiley guitarist Blake Sennett and his newly-formed band The Elected. Their debut album ME FIRST is an impressive mix of sun-stained pop and electric tomfoolery that well establishes Mr. Sennett as a genuine talent. The Elected's live show was as bizarre and impressive as the record, with a definite highlight being Blake taking the stage with a gas mask with a microphone hooked up inside of it. Mr. Sennett also proceeded to call his mother before going into a rousing version of "C'mon Mom". It's this sort of peculiar sentiment that seems to define who The Elected are—but that is also a large part of their charm.

<AZURE RAY>



After two such surprisingly inspired sets, Azure Ray was given the honors to close out the evening. The band's wistful, melancholy pop certainly fit the rest of the bill. However, it lacked the spark that both of the openers had displayed in spades. Playing a varied mix (mostly of last year's HOLD ON LOVE and 2002's gorgeous BURN AND SHIVER), the band played all the right notes...without hitting upon anything worth remembering. Granted, the band's style of music isn't conducive to a rock 'n' roll spectacle, but too often the songs sounded too pensive for their own good, leaving me ultimately uninterested. It's one thing to be dreamy, but it's another to put your audience to sleep.

The Unseen The Virus Cheap Sex Career Soldiers

March 13, 2004
@ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
By Melissa Manrique

Rocking some Jeff Buckley during the ride to the Glass House, I was happy to leave my second home of small shop shows to return to my venue/show roots, even though it's hard to find good all-ages shows when you're still "small." Before I begin, my advice is to not trust www.mapquest.com directions, because you will end up in a totally different location. To hell with Mapquest! A bunch of filthy punks with cancer sticks tucked behind their ears and skyscraper mohawks were one of the first things I noticed as I struggled to find a place to park. Many of them gathered around a trash can, sat near gutters, walked around...They were everywhere. Simply wearing jeans and a plain shirt, I felt out of place. Some of the kids sported their shirts with "The Virus" or "The Unseen" emblazoned across their chest. Why were they outside? Oh, well.

From the music that easily escaped through the walls, I figured I showed up in the middle of the set of The Virus, which wasn't too bad. The size of the crowd when I arrived was pretty massive, and it seemed to double by the time I got to the door. Just before handing over my ticket with impatience, a handwritten "Sold Out" sign was posted on the door. Figures why so many kids were hanging out in the front. One of the security guys helped a few kids sneak in who weren't able to purchase their tickets, which I thought that was really cool of him. Finally, I made my way inside. The Virus, a typical grungy hardcore punk band that formed in February 1998, was a great ball of energy, and the crowd was certainly hyped. Lots of energy given off by these guys. It was too crowded inside. There was some nice moshing that took place. Initially, it kind of felt awkward, because I'm not accustomed to some random guy trying to get me involuntarily involved in the mosh pit more than once. A few of the crowd kids had their fists raised in the air to show how core they could be and were cut up from the pit. Jarrod, the last original member, was not on stage. Black Jon (formerly of Blind Society) is the new permanent drummer, according to the guy with liberty spikes next to me that talked incredibly loud. The addition of their new drummer seemed to work well and made a positive difference to the band, which reflected to the response from the crowd. All the boys on stage had some energy flowing. Some hardcore fan next to me started jumping up and down almost five feet in the air. "Throwaway Kids", "Full Circle", and other songs off of their album STILL FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE were played. Okay, sorry if I don't have much to say about this band because I showed up late. Sue me.

If you haven't heard of The Unseen, you might as well get out of town. These four guys are from Boston and already have four full-length LPs under their belts (most recently, EXPLODE on BYO Records) and have been playing punk rock for about a decade now. Some kick-ass bands they've toured with are: The Casualties, Anti-Flag, Dropkick Murphy's, Violent Society, Lower Class Brats, and Bouncing Souls. Christian of the hardcore pop-punk band Essen once said good things about the band performing live, and excellent they were indeed. The explosive energy that The Virus projected live earlier was still running high, and the crowd of high-school kids' response was slightly more than the previous. I could see that they were really connected with the crowd, and that is one of the key points in performing live. Communicating with the crowd added to why this band had an amazing stage presence, which earned them extra brownie points in my book. The mosh pits broke out in constant motion. There were a few loyal fans standing around either singing along with every word or just staring off into space. The Unseen played mostly their new songs from EXPLODE and played a cover song of some '80s hair band, I think. (Forgive me if I'm wrong: I don't remember the exact details of what went on that night.) "Halloween", "Social Security", "Police Brutality", "Beat It", and a shorter version of "ADD" were in the set list, from what I remember. I really enjoyed this set.

Even though the event did not terminate, I decided to head home when an assortment of people expressed their love of that band. It's too bad I didn't feel like taking my camera. I sort of regret it to the fullest. Reason being: overall, the show was pretty sweet. Any downfalls? The fact I missed Cheap Sex and Career Soldiers. Also, being pushed out of the way almost too often and having my view blocked by others (since I was way shorter than everyone else in the room). It's all good, though cause being short was cool at the time, since I had the ability to move between people and get near the front. Yayers to that.

THE DUCKY BOYS BLOOD FOR BLOOD DROPKICK MURPHYS

March 16, 2004
@ the Wiltern (Los Angeles)
By Todd Markel

As I was heading to the Wiltern in the old theater district of Los Angeles, I was hit by the fact that "WOW, I'm driving through a really crappy section of town," so I rolled up my windows, locked my doors, and proceeded with caution. Not long after my realization, I came upon my destination, a jewel set amongst the urban blight of the surrounding city. I had never been to the Wiltern before, and I was impressed. It's a very large, art-deco movie theater built in 1931 with a capacity of about 2300. They've removed all 1200 of the lower-level seating, so it's standing-room only on the first level. If you were one of the first hundred to gain access to the area directly in front of the stage, you were given a wristband that allowed you to come and go, so it really paid to arrive early. The show was being billed as a Boston invasion, featuring three bands from the Boston area playing on the day before Saint Patrick's Day. Why not on Saint Patrick's Day? you may ask. Well, that's because Dropkick Murphys were scheduled to appear on JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE on Saint Patrick's Day to play one song.

The first Boston band to kick it off was The Ducky Boys. This is a new version of the band, which had originally split up a few years ago. It's been over five years since they've played a show in Los Angeles. The lead singer started their set off by kicking a roll of duct tape off the stage and right into some girl's face. He was genuinely sorry, and she appeared to be alright. The Ducky Boys came from the same Boston scene as the Dropkicks, and they play a straight-ahead type of rock 'n' roll, with songs of defiance and alienation. Their first song had lyrics along the lines of "You gotta do what you do / Fuck you!" They also played a sing-along called "Misfit", with the catch line of "Misfit, misfit I'm not the only one." Sometimes it takes a cover song to help a band connect a little more with the crowd, as it gives the people something that sounds familiar and that they can sing to. The Ducky Boys accomplished this by playing a couple covers, the first being a punk-rock version of "Stand by Me" that finally got a little circle pit going, and the second being a rousing version of U2's "Sunday Bloody Sunday". They closed their set with an original called "I've Got My Friends". This reformed version of the band promised it wouldn't be another five years before they return.

The Boston Invasion continued with a band called Blood for Blood. They weren't what I

<THE DEAL>



would have called your typical Irish band; they were much more hardcore or old-school punk, with a few Oi! songs thrown in. The lead singer said it best when he announced, "It's time to get some aggression out." They then busted out with a tune that went, "The sign in the road says we're going nowhere." The pit pretty much went crazy as they played their ode to rehab, "All Fucked Up", with its line, "I gotta stop living my life / All fucked up." They played a song about love gone wrong that had the line that says it all "Fucking a pussy is like fucking the womb of a shotgun blast with gangrene." Blood for Blood closed their set with a crowd-pleaser that went, "Fuck you, and fuck society, too." People just love to shove their middle finger in the air, don't they? Check out Blood for Blood at their Web site .

A Dropkick Murphys' show always seems more like a sporting event, with all the clapping and shouts of "Let's go Murphys." This show was no different, and you could tell whom this crowd was here to see. The drama started as the their huge banner unfurled and fell all at once to a large cheer, and then the clapping and chanting started anew. The lights then went out, and a female voice started singing a haunting Celtic-type song. A shiver ran up my spine as a lone piper appeared playing a tune that sounded vaguely like the Old Spice theme, and suddenly the Murphys are on stage and blast into "The Worker's Song" (one of many that they were to play off of their latest CD, BLACKOUT). With its chorus of "We're the first ones to starve / The first ones to die," they had everyone in the audience singing the words back to the band. I haven't been in a decent slam pit like this in quite a while. It can be contagious—sometimes a little too contagious. At one point I saw this small guy who looked a lot like Seth Green getting overtly excited, and then all of a sudden some big guy shoves him to the ground. Seth starts to get up, and the big guy shoves him down again, shows him his tattoo, flips him the bird, and tells him to stay down or get the fuck out. I'm like, Wow, do I help? But Seth gets up, apologizes, and they shake hands and everything's cool. The band took a short break to bring on stage blonde beauty, Stephanie Dougherty to sing "The Dirty Glass", which is a little ditty about a relationship gone bad. A few high points of the show were when they played their single "Walk Away" and the poignant "World Full of Hate". They brought the energy level back up by playing "Gonna Be a Blackout tonight" and "Kiss Me, I'm Shitfaced"; and "Black Velvet Band" capped the evening off. All in all, a great show that left you feeling a wee bit

Irish. Check out their Website for upcoming tour dates: www.dropkickmurphys.com.

FADEDOWN FEST: NIGHT ONE
XDISCIPLEX A.D.
SINAI BEACH
SEVENTH STAR

THE DEAL
ALIVE FOR ENEMIES

ONE-21

TRAUMA
HIT THE DECK

March 19, 2004
@ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
Text by Johnny Rocket
Photos by Chad Sengstock

Well, here I am again, sitting down once more to recount the glory of Facedown Fest. This was my third year of attending Facedown Fest and second year reviewing it. The past three years the fest has been a huge, two-night gala, showcasing some of the hardest-working bands that are part of the Facedown family. Oh, and before I forget to say it: the bands will blow you away. Facedown Records itself has been making its presence felt throughout the nation, especially over the last few years. Facedown Records was started in 1997 by Jason Dunn (No Innocent Victim/Dodgin' Bullets) and has remained a loyal, independent label all the while. To check out the bands,

<TRAUMA>





<XDISCIPLEX A.D.>

buy merchandise, or find out more info about Facedown Records, check out the Web site at www.facedownrecords.com.

It was a warm winter's eve. The sun was still hanging low in the sky, yet it still felt too bright and early to be going to a show. Chad and I were on our way just after 5 p.m., because we knew that traffic would be crawling along on the 57 North, seeing as how it was rush hour on a Friday night. We couldn't have been more right. After an excruciatingly slow drive, the freeway speeds picked back up and our hope remained positive to make it to the show in time to see Hit the Deck open. We grabbed our bags and hurried to the box-office window to pick up our brightly-colored wristband and get inside. We were surprised to see a line stretching down from the window along the chipped wall to where we would meet our doom. As we sat in line hardly moving, the sounds of Hit the Deck began to pour out on us from a rusting vent high atop the wall. Our hearts sunk, because this band is worthy of so much more than an opening spot on the first night, and we cursed the wretched line that was forcing us to miss them. If you listened to Hit the Deck, you would instantly think they were a leftover and forgotten band from the early-'80s hardcore scene—you know, back when hardcore used to be called "punk" and guys didn't have girl haircuts. Furthermore, when they play their Minor Threat cover (usually "Little Friend"), you would think twice about it actually BEING a cover. I could faintly hear them play two other songs that I have grown familiar with, "Lockdown" and "Heads You Lose", which are available for download from their Website, www.xhitthedeckx.com. Chad and I finally grabbed our wristbands and hoped to quickly get through the doors and catch Hit the Deck's last song, but something had set its will against us on this night.

We were faced with a daunting new line of nearly 200 kids who seemed to be just as impatient as ourselves. So there we were once again, stuck in a never-ending line, as Trauma had finished setting up and began the start of their set. At this point, we were not very happy with the way the show had been set up. We didn't know if it was the Glass House's fault or not, but nearly 200 kids also missed Hit the Deck because of all this. By the time we got inside, went through the backstage, and found our way to the top of the stage to take photos, Trauma had one song left. I didn't catch the name of any of their songs, but they played heavily metal-influenced hardcore. They are Southern

California locals and are signed to Strike First Records, a sub-label of Facedown.

Shortly after that point, my hopes were being fulfilled. I had been waiting two years to finally catch Philadelphia's own One-21 again. This was one of the few bands bringing quality punk rock to the fest, as they have been doing for eight years. They played a mixed set of old, newer, and new songs, from the classic "City Violence" to "Pacified" to the very recent "I Can't Wait" (the last of which can be found on their latest album, GRENADE).

The crowd was still getting cozy and warmed up by the time Above for Enemies announced they were ready to go. To be honest, I did not watch this band, as I was busy doing some shopping in the merch area located in a separate room. I have heard only good things about these guys, as they are from Long Island, NY, and incorporate a little of that infamous "NYHC" sound into more familiar metal.

By the time Chad and I got done purchasing all our fancy new shirts, it was time to go watch one of my favorite bands, The Deal. The Deal has been putting out some of the best tunes for as long as I have been listening to them. Incorporating the roots of hardcore, Oi!, punk rock, and none other than rock 'n' roll, these five guys from Chino have been churning it up and showing themselves to be the cream of the crop. I read a recent CD review of their new album CUTTHROAT and was in awe when it was described as "shrieking vocals" and "metal." That is quite far from the truth. The Deal has very little in common with metal; they are, in fact, true to sounds of original hardcore and not metal. Anyways, it's one thing to listen to them, but it's quite another to see them perform. If you can't shake your bones to The Deal, then you're either dead or too scared to have a little fun. The Deal brings a little something for everyone, whether it is swinging fists in the air while singing along, circle pits of fury, stage-dives, or the occasional breakdown (for those dancers out there). The Deal played a few of their classic songs, "Soon Cometh the Day" and "Rise Up". They also busted out some songs from CUTTHROAT—namely, "C-Lo", "3 Hots and a Cot", and "Vultures". To add to the excitement, The Deal played three excellent cover songs: Black Flag's "Rise Above", Minor Threat's "Screaming at a Wall", and No Innocent Victim's "My Beliefs".

While the kids took a breather and started to regroup, Florida natives Seventh Star swarmed the stage. Showing off a new singer, Seventh Star "brought the mosh" with a tough new attitude. Indeed, their new singer brought a much more rough and tough sound, especially during "Represent", where even the bassist relieved himself of his instrument and joined the singing. They were hard-hitting and drew off all the energy from the kids. Though it had been non-stop chaos on the stage and the dance floor, the best was yet to come.

Playing runner-up on this night was Sinal Beach, who has been storming around the country on tour over the past year or two. They filled the air with milastic metal, which echoed strongly throughout the walls—walls that barely could contain the swell of people. "Chugged breakdowns, powerful single-note droning riffs, forced vocals, and some singing" sum up Sinal Beach quite beautifully. I was excited to hear them play "Vile", which includes some very memorable lyrics: "I might just nail your tongue / To the bathroom floor / Where that feces belongs." If

that's not metal, I don't know what is.

Then the audience was becoming aware of a quite sad moment: XDiscallex A.D. was taking the stage for the final time. After nearly a decade of bringing their familiar and brutal "Lake Effect" hardcore rhythms, it was all coming to an end...but what an end they made it! They jolted with an intro song and tore into a barrage of other songs, jokingly claiming that they were going to play nearly all 50 or so songs that they had ever recorded. One thing they definitely did not joke about was letting some special friends come on stage. None other than No Innocent Victim hopped up and borrowed the instruments for a seemingly impromptu performance of "Never Face Defeat". The crowd reached a new zenith for the night, reenergized by the deep-throated vocals and aggressive presence of No Innocent Victim. Before I knew it, XDiscallex A.D. was back in action, feeding off the incredible spirit that filled the room. They nailed down tracks from their early beginnings and all through the years, up to their most recent CD, THE REVELATION. Some of their songs: "Held Accountable", "Scarab", "Armachristi", "Venomous", "Pray Your Gods", "Refuge And Strength", "New Defiance", and "Trial by Fire". They violently ended their final show as the stage-dives came to a smashing halt and the dancers once again became static. A roar of applause rang out, followed quickly by a futile attempt of shouts for an encore. But there would be no encore. The house lights were quickly turned on, and the microphone's sound was cut.

So ended the glorious night of Facedown Fest. But all was not lost, since the second night was just around the corner. The second night would feature another slew of Facedown bands and would be sure to compete with the audacity of the first night.

Pretty Girls Make Graves The Constantines The Red Light Sting

March 19, 2004
@ the Trocadero Theatre (Philadelphia)
By Matthew Siblo

With the recent success of their second full-length THE NEW ROMANCE, Pretty Girls Make Graves stormed into the Philadelphia area with all guns ablaze. Considerable media attention and positive crowd reactions have made Pretty Girls one of the brightest hopes for indiedom's always-uncertain future. It was this moment that the band was able to headline a night at the significantly larger Trocadero theatre (as opposed to their usual stomping grounds, the intimate, more personal First Unitarian Church).

When it comes to PGMG's tourmates, I'd be the first to point out that the band has an almost flawless track record with their choices for support. On this tour, however, it seems as if the band had lowered their standards or perhaps just stopped doing any sort of background checks. The first band I caught that night was The Red Light Sting. This band was the equivalent of the worst Blood Brothers song incarnate, a soulless, homogenized version of the real thing. Everything about The Red Light Sting, from the band's appearance to their vocal patterns, made the band seem as if they were nothing more than a designer imposter version of the genuine article. After about four songs, I wondered to myself how much longer I could continue to stand around and watch this charade go on! Ironically enough, I found little solace at the merchandise table, where I

noticed that even the band's T-shirts and album covers looked like you know whose. At this point, however, I gave up trying to make any sense out of this madness and instead let my thoughts of copyright infringement and calls to the U.S. patent office swirl in my aching brain, until the next band was to take the stage.

While I have yet to truly catch on to The Constantines' latest full-length, SHINE A LIGHT, I was highly anticipating what was rumored to be an exuberant and high-spirited live show...so you can imagine my disappointment when I received quite the opposite. The band's show was very similar to The Constantines I'm familiar with on record, which I find to be sluggish and criminally mediocre. The band's set lacked that very same spark, leaving me to watch their Springsteen-inspired riffs and Hot Water Music rasp with a relative indifference. The band's quick flirtation with Rod Stewart's "Young Turks" was the only fleeting highlight, leaving me no choice but to reinforce my general apathy for all things Constantines.

I have always found Pretty Girls to essentially be a live band. While both of their records have done a fairly good job at capturing the stirring intensity of PGMG's live show, neither of them accurately represents how powerful the bands performances are. Rarely have I ever been disappointed when Andrea and Co. have taken the stage, and this night proved to be no different. The band took the stage with the subdued "Blue Lights", but picked up the pace shortly thereafter. Plowing through nearly an even split of the band's catalogue, PGMG commanded the crowds attention with their relentless energy and passion. The band seemed comfortable on stage, striking an impressive balance between their fast-paced GOOD HEALTH material and the more subdued NEW ROMANCE, creating a varied yet, cohesive-sounding set. The crowd was even treated to a new song as the sets closer, which also sounded very promising. Upon first listen, the new song seemed to be going in a Gang of Four sort of direction (but then again, after just one initial listen, I could be very wrong). The song then led into a rousing impromptu, 15+-person jam that incorporated members from all the bands who played. It didn't sound all that great, but man, was it fun to watch! Overall, however, Pretty Girls Make Graves continues to demonstrate their ability to reinvent themselves with every performance they play, making them a wonderfully rare commodity in today's musical landscape.

SLIGHTLY STOOPID PEPPER BARGAIN MUSIC

March 25, 2004

@ the House of Blues (Anaheim, CA)
Text by Annette Ovanessian

Yes, I was late—but I have an excuse! There was traffic. I mean, the House of Blues in Anaheim should keep in mind that for people who are trying to come to their shows that start at 8:00 all the way from Los Angeles, making it on time is a long shot! I honestly left my house around 6:30, clearly knowing that there would be traffic awaiting me, but, I mean, what time should you leave? Another thing that made me late was the will call situation. I was supposed to have a photo pass waiting for me, but I didn't, so now I had to



walk ALL the way back to my car, about a mile away to put my camera back. By the time I walked back and stood in line to get in, I clearly missed the first band, but I was praying I didn't miss Pepper's performance, too.

Anyway, I apologize to Bargain Music for missing their performance; and to Pepper, for only catching their last few songs. The songs that I did catch from Pepper were about "pussy." That is to be expected from Pepper. Constantly praising pussy and throwing up pussy hand signals was quite humorous, but a bit annoying for some women in the audience. I mean, it's a tease, you know? Let's see what you got, Pepper! I'm not sure which Pantera song they covered, but it was the last song of their set, and they clearly ended the show heated. Pepper has a new album out called IN WITH THE OLD, and if it's anything like their first album, KONA TOWN, then you'll be in sweet reggae heaven. Visit www.pepperlive.com to find out more about this wonderful, Hawaiian-based band.

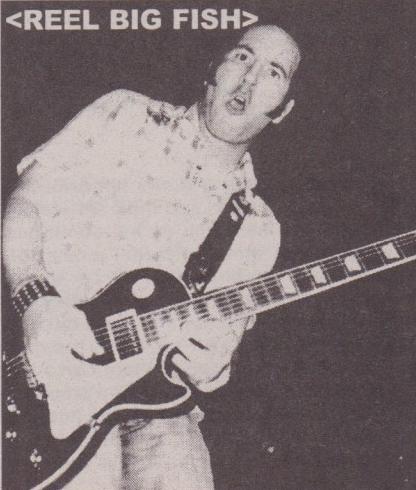
The venue was completely packed from top to bottom with all the surfer/skater guys and girls who live in the O.C. It was an all-ages show, and I would say that 60% of the audience was under 18 years old. I was desperately trying to find a place where I could see the stage, but failed. I ended up sitting on a stool upstairs and capturing the foreheads of Slightly Stoopid. I was pissed off at this time, but you know, Slightly Stoopid is so amazing live that my mood quickly changed. Having seen Slightly Stoopid a few times before, this was the first time where I saw them play an acoustic set. They came out singing my all-time favorite song off EVERYTHING YOU NEED, "Collie Man", and my heart felt like it was about to stop. It was the first time that I heard them play that song live, and at the moment, it took me back to the time when I interviewed Slightly Stoopid last year and I asked Miles, "Who is Mr. Collie Man?" and he replied, "He's the herbs man." Well, I think that's why it's my favorite song, because whenever the herbs man comes to me, it's always a good time! For about one hour they were playing the acoustic set, and it was so cool to watch the kids down below crowd-surf to the very slow-paced sound of reggae. To me, that meant, that the kids enjoyed the music so much that even slow songs can make you jump around out of love. As I was sitting there to myself, wondering what else I can get out of this night, my friend Fat Mark from 77 Records walked by me and noticed my frustration. He did everything he could to get me a photo pass, and got one within minutes. I then ran all the way back to my car and all the way back to the H.O.B. just to take pictures. By this time, Slightly Stoopid was in the second hour of their set, and this hour was not an acoustic one. They were now standing up, and both Miles and Kyle were switching back and forth from playing bass and guitar. I got on stage with the band and looked out upon the audience to notice all the hard-

core fans Slightly Stoopid has produced. There were people who were fighting to get in the front by heavy pushing, and a lot of bitch girls were mad dogging me, for some reason. A big "fuck you!" goes out to the drunken lady who wouldn't move so I could get in the barricades to take my flicks; and to her pussy-whipped boyfriend who took her side and blocked my passage, too. But a big "thank you" goes out to Slightly Stoopid for singing nearly every song off their albums, which makes it totally worth it if you paid \$30 to get in. After playing for over two hours, they still came out for an encore performance, which left the whole crowd completely satisfied.

SAVE ERIC BENEFIT SHOW:
THE AQUABATS
REEL BIG FISH
STARPOOL
LIT
HOMEGROWN
SUBURBAN LEGENDS
THE FORCES OF EVIL

March 26, 2004
@ Henry Fonda (Hollywood, CA)
Text and photos by Annette Ovanessian

For such a worthy cause and such an all-star line-up, the "Save Eric Benefit Show" was a complete success. I know you're all wondering: "Who is this Eric guy we're all trying to save?" Well, Eric Zamora is a musician. He used to play saxophone for Save Ferris, and he currently plays saxophone in Starpool. Eric became ill and will be having two major surgeries in the next few months. Having no health insurance, just imagine how expen-



<HOMEGROWN>



sive his hospital bills will be. I'm sure it's impossible to buy health insurance once you're already sick. Luckily, Eric has some true friends. His fellow bandmates from Starpool asked a bunch of popular bands if they would play for free to help raise money. Well, seven bands agreed, and the night was filled with highlights!

Due to a bit of a will-call problem in the beginning, I missed The Forces of Evil. I did, however, walk in just in time to catch Suburban Legends as they crowded the stage with chaos. Their whole performance was so neatly choreographed that they looked like a ska version of a boy band. The horn section was simultaneously dancing with their horns, and towards the end of their act they all took part in a dance routine. Although this doesn't mean that their music sounds good, it does mean that they are continually trying to find ways of improving their stage presence.

Starpool was on next! This was my first time ever hearing the band, and I was impressed by their tremendous amount of energy on stage. I could really tell that the whole band put their heart and soul into their performance, not only to impress first-timers like me, but also to show how much they appreciated everyone's attendance. The band certainly showed how much they value and care for Eric as a friend and a bandmate. Alan (vocals) said, "If Eric was here, he would want to hug every one of you!" He also took time out to read a note that Eric wrote for everyone, and some of it read: "I can't tell you how much I appreciate it and how much this will help with the expenses [...] I'll take it day by day and enjoy life as we all should." The audience was really generous and supportive, as they were loudly clapping while absorbing Eric's words. As Starpool sparked up the stage with hope and concern, Homegrown were about to receive some heavy attention.

Homegrown is such a funny band. Besides their humorous songs and their shit-talking at shows, they are such an awesome band for playing this show for free. I mean, John (guitar) said it himself: "We're usually known for loving bitches and money, but tonight it's about bitches and more bitches." That's cool...but it didn't seem like too many bitches were interested in them that night, as bottles were being thrown on stage and many folks were calling out for The Aquabats instead. But, the audience was going to have to wait until two more bands hit the stage: Lit and Reel Big Fish.

Lit is known for being a one-hit wonder; and to tell you the truth, I was only excited to see the band because of the fine-looking frontman. But, surprisingly, I had a great time watching their performance. I can't say that I'm a fan of their music, but they were really into the benefit and showed the audience a good time. I was wondering why Homegrown would get shit thrown at them, and Lit got nothing but love, especially from the ladies! When A. Jay (vocals) jumped into the barricades and leaned into the crowd, I couldn't help but laugh at all the girls who were monster-gripping his ass. Isn't that sexual harassment?

Lots of people were there to see Reel Big Fish. This would be my second time seeing them perform, so I kind of knew what to expect: one hell of a good time! Sure enough, when Dan (trombone) came out with a long-haired wig and a grandma dress on, I already knew that we were in for a good time. Even though the air was so hot and humid by this time, Reel Big Fish put their all into their act and sang most of their most popular songs. This paved the way for The Aquabats.

It was so interesting to see a lot of kids in the audience dressed up as an Aquabat. Wearing Aquabat masks, and wearing Aquabat hats really showed that they're an influential band. The Aquabats are truly a one-of-a-kind act, and they get a kick out of throwing things in the audience (like autographed Nerf balls) and spraying everyone with confetti. On a screen behind them, they often took breaks to share clips from their awesomely hilarious DVD collection, SERIOUS AWESOMENESS. When they sang "Super Rad", the audience went wild, moshing and crowd-surfing.

This event was a true benefit to everyone who was there, whether you enjoyed the bands or not. I think it helped to bring the selfishness in us out and to let the heart back in!

SATURDAY'S CHILD SHADOW DROP FACELESS RAMBIS

March 27, 2003
@ the Jumping Turtle (San Diego)
By Ian Wilkins

Are you in a band and everybody is telling you they will suck your dick and that they have the means for your stardom—but in reality they can't even get the pre-cum started, nor do they do anything other than try to look cool hanging on to your side while riding your coattails? Well, the Jumping Turtle is doing something really cool for bands. If I had an extra 500 words, I would tell you all about it, but just go to their Web site and check it out: (It is in your best interest.)

A cool offshore breeze is rifling through my hair, a tall glass of ice-cold beer is sitting in my right hand, while my left is holding a half-lit red. The beers are cheap, and the good vibes are free. Can life get any better? (Maybe, maybe not. It's a...conundrum.) Quick sidenote: the Jumping Turtle sits right of the 78 freeway, nestled in a cozy spot right next door to a place that sells cheap-ass smokes. They have recently built a stage that is pretty damn big for a bar, with a sound system that

could easily fit in any concert hall. Life is good.

What is prompt? My dry cleaning at Mr. Chin's—and Rambis at 7:30. "I love it when a plan comes together." (Who said that?) Your typical four-piece band playing your typical four-piece punk set. Don't get me wrong: they weren't bad; they just need to work on some style with a capital S. I did find myself bobbing my head during a few of their faster songs, but a recommendation to them might be to lay off the slow ones till they are on MTV and girls everywhere are masturbating to their pictures. (Can you imagine it? Mmm, young girls playing with their...Sorry.)

Faceless: decent band with a future, if they keep there heads on straight. These guys are fucking nuts, and their music showed it. Pretty fucking fast, but the kind of fast where you know the guys spent some time working on the shit to make it sound the way it did. By this time the bar was standing-room only, probably close to 300 people were squeezed in the place, 250 of them standing in front of the stage. If you are in a band, this is the goal (just in case you were wondering). Only thing that could have made them any better would be if some of their hot little fans would show some titties.

250 people just became a million. Why, you ask? I don't fucking know. Give me a second. Shadowdrop takes the stage—the crowd simmers down to a quiet hush. Bam! mother-fuckers, it is like fireworks in December. (Did I get your attention) No small talk, no, "Hey, how you doing?"—just a straight-up 200-mph-in-0.6-seconds-type shit. Oh, and they are pretty amazing musicians. I don't know who is luckier, Askaic Records (who just signed the band to their label) or Shadowdrop. Askaic Records is one of those labels that actually takes care of their bands (I swear it's true) and doesn't hold back when it comes to anything. Shadowdrop is one of those bands that no matter what were going to make it somehow—and this was the time. Ripping through a two-hour set in like 45 minutes, this band left you wanting more...and more. How do I get more? Hey, I will go to and look. (I am a fucking genius.)

The evening was going so well...then Saturday's Child hit the fan. I know you want me to rip them, but for once I am going to hold back. Yeah, get that Coke bottle out of your ass—it's making you hallucinate, sicko. I left after the fourth song, because I couldn't take it anymore. How did they get the last spot? Why, were they a band? I have no answers to your driving questions. Sorry. They had about as much talent as a crack whore building a house of cards. Skill? I have more skill talking Japanese. Don't waste your time on this band. I did, and now I have this fucking twitch in my left nut.

As I was leaving, I noticed the moon was full, and I realized that I hate all of you people. Are you still reading this? It's over—go home. Stop, there is no more here. Just rambling....

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

March 27–28, 2004 @ Camber Sands
Holiday Park (Rye, England)
By Mathew Hocking

Steve Albini once said, "There are three things in the world that I endorse: Abbey Road Studios, Nutter Butter Sandwich Cookies, and All Tomorrow's Parties."

Celebrating its fifth occurrence, it is a music festival like no other, staged in a typically English village in a typically English holiday centre on the south coast and unorthodox in every respect. Punters stay in clean, warm chalets instead of the usual cold, wet tents, while bands play in on-site buildings rather than an outdoor stage. The lineup is also different, in that each day is curated entirely by its headliners...and this year looks absolutely incredible!

I miss the first day (curated by Mogwai and featuring the diverse talents of Envy, Cat Power, Isis, Converge, Kid 606, and Turbonegro, along with many others) because of other commitments; but Saturday (curated by Tortoise) provided a superb replacement.

Unfortunately, I miss the ballistic psychedelic hardcore of The Boredoms that EVERYONE was talking about for the rest of the weekend, but I do manage to catch the OTHER band on everyone's lips: the legendary Lightning Bolt. Setting up their equipment in a cramped corner next to the bar, their bare-bones rock 'n' roll hurricane of screechingly dissonant free-falling bass riffs and cataclysmic drum fills provided one of the most memorable sets of the weekend. And, not limiting themselves to just one performance, by the end of the weekend they'd played inside chalets and given an impromptu wake-up call in the guest-area courtyard. Incredible! Before them, my idol Mike Watt and his Secondmen band slipped and slid through funkadelic licks and improvisational jams, Watt accompanying the music with some wryly-satirical everyman solos that had me beaming in awe. However, the band of the weekend had to be Tortoise. With each member taking a turn on each instrument throughout the set, they unleashed a heady mix of fluttering glockenspiels, carouselling skirls of synth, and trance-like instrumental flourishes to brilliant effect. As I sit directly at the front of the stage (smug at the opportunities my guest pass affords me), I find myself disappearing into a daydream of beautifully-crafted pop poise, content at having witnessed one of the most exciting sets of the year. This is a band I will definitely be investigating further.

Thankfully, Sunday (curated by Shellac) provided some more surprises. Mysteriously awaking early (4:45 p.m.) for A Whisper in the Noise's set, I kind of wished I'd stayed in bed, for, although their atmospheric strings and lush-toned electronics provided a nice hangover cure, their brooding interplay seemed to lack focus, especially to these boozed-out ears. I make my way to the larger upstairs room to catch French Toast, consisting of James Cauty and Jerry Busher. They're old players in the Washington DC scene and recommended to me in last night's haze, but I just end up crashing out at the back of the room, unable to translate their intense, drum-looped keyboard-wizardry.

Back downstairs, Chicago's Atombombpocket knife's dense, percolating harmonies ripple with a warm, iridescent glow...before Dead Meadow's tediously bland introspection had me searching for refuge in the bar. Which was where I found one of the guys I came with slouched in the corner slurring some advanced form of bollocks to some random German girl. I leave him be and check out Stinking Lizaveta, whose awe-inspiring fusion of Beefheart and upright-bass-fuelled rock was a marvellous find.

Once back in the upstairs room, I find a cell phone on the floor, so I proceed to play its myriad of games while Arcwelder strut their intensely intelligent stuff. That's before the owner calls it, asking for it back—and, at my request, gives me some handy advice for one of the trickier platform games. He also buys me a pint, which is slowly savoured before the legend that is Steve Albini strolls on stage to greet his faithful flock. Having been instrumental in overseeing the progression of the hardcore scene from the tired and clichéd to the audacious and challenging through his bands Big Black, Rapeman, and Shellac (not to mention his admirable production credits), it's evident the ATP crowd are more than prepared to show their appreciation. Executing Shellac's finest moments of conceptual abstraction, their set is an absolute joy to watch (especially because of the infrequency of their live shows).

However, what happened after Shellac is a bit of a blur. Memories of entering a chalet to bum a cigarette for a new-found friend only to be given a beer and a Pot Noodle merge closely with the recollection of throwing myself around to Pelican in some dimly-lit room of stoner youths. But that's all okay. This isn't real life, this is ATP. Same time next year, then?

FINCH COUNTERFIT BETA FACTOR

THE FALL PROJECT

April 9, 2004
@ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
By Carley Charpentier

Once all the teens had shuffled in and the soda pop was flowing, four-man band out of Idaho The Fall Project took the stage ready to rock. Unfamiliar with their sound, the crowd and I managed to shut up for a moment and let them give us what they got, which turned out to be some predominant drums and talented vocals. From what I could tell, the guitar riffs were just about the same from song to song; but then again, the drums seemed to overpower the performance as a whole. We all know that going first is a tough job, but these guys managed to break the ice with some dorky kiss-ass jokes; and with songs titled "Rick Random and the Space Pirates", it was difficult not to find these guys amusing. After doing a little more on-the-job research I was impressed to find out that those faint guitar riffs were coming from their guitarist of only one week—which definitely made me appreciate their performance that much more. While the guitars could use some work (and who wouldn't after only one week?!), The Fall Project got the crowd pumped and anticipating more from this up-and-coming group.

When you write the words "get their CD" on your page of notes at a show, you know it was magic. So I'd like to give the next band, Beta Factor, a big "thank you" for making magic for me. The minute this five-man, magic band took the stage, I knew they'd have something to offer. Their first song, "Beg and Plead", gave the entire audience a

taste of their eclectic sound. By incorporating a keyboard into all of their numbers, Beta Factor separated themselves from the rest of the night's bands. In addition to the synthesizing keyboard, Beta Factor has a very powerful drum and bass combo, which complemented their sound pretty well. While Beta Factor is a relatively local band (being from Temecula), most of the crowd was unfamiliar with what to expect. But judging from the mass amount of movement and head-bobbing in the middle of the second song, "This Is Goodbye", I would say the crowd grew to like—if not totally dig—Beta Factor. By the last song, just about everyone was completely immersed in their sound and not ready for their set to end. Lucky for us, we can visit their Website to peruse and post props at.

Now, I thought going on first had to be hard, but following Beta Factor and serving as a precursor to Finch couldn't exactly be easy...but the guys from Counterfit did it damn well. Hitting the crowd with syncopated rhythms and a shitload of energy, Counterfit served up a plate of kick-ass rock. For the most part, Counterfit offered slower and more melodic indie rock—a music vastly different from the at times emotional hardcore sounds of headliner Finch. Despite the genre differences, the masses seemed to sink their teeth into a lot of what they had to offer. Playing the MTV hit "From Finish to Starting Line" and tossing in some new (untitled) work gave the audience a taste of what Counterfit has to offer. While the music was rocking and the crowd was bopping along, there wasn't much chemistry between the band and the crowd. Perhaps it was the heat, or maybe it was the simple fact that in a crowd of discriminatory Finch lovers it's hard to get the love you need.

But the band that DID get the love they needed—perhaps an overdose of it—was none other than Finch themselves. Starting off the show with a crowd-pleaser and a crowd sing-along was a sure-fire hit with the front row of 16-year-olds. In Finch tradition, the guys hopped around stage, making the photographers dizzy and encouraging massive audience interaction—which they were more than happy to give. Belting out most of their tracks from WHAT IT IS TO BURN, the set list was a crowd-pleaser and also included their new track "Worms of the Earth". The crowd was clearly more fond of the more familiar, older tracks, but they definitely found some funk and syncopation in their new titles. I'm not sure whether it was the confusion amongst the shrill screams or bass amps, but no one seemed to even acknowledge or notice that Finch was exhibiting their new and very capable drummer, Mark, a new-found replacement for former drummer Alex Pappas. In conjunction with the rest of the band, our new friend Mark was able to take on even the most demanding of numbers and serve up a healthy portion of whoop-ass for the very excited crowd. The energy was so immense that the "encore" was just a given. In fact, lead singer Nate Barcalow expressed his dislike for encores and would prefer to take a minute break before their final song—which, appropriately enough, is entitled "Ender". While I've heard that song many times, never until now have I been brought to tears. Despite any hang-ups the night may have offered, Finch finished off one hell of a show with an incredible song.

PUNKS vs. PSYCHOS II: TIGER ARMY THE BUSINESS ROGER MERIT & THE DISASTERS F-MINUS U.S. ROUGHNECKS

April 3, 2004

@ the Glass House (Pomona, CA)
Review and Photos
by Annette Ovanessian

With the April showers in full effect, and the streets covered with an assortment of high hair, this sold-out show captured the many faces of punk rock. My stomach was upset with excitement as I was waiting in line at will call, because I was now one moment closer to seeing one of my favorite bands, Tiger Army!

One thing that I thought was pretty interesting was the title of the tour: Punks vs. Psychos. Tiger Army is the only psychobilly band on the roster, so I guess in reality they would be outnumbered by the punks and lose, but in actuality Tiger Army themselves have no competition. I can't really say that I know too much about the punk bands of the evening, but each one of them served a different purpose to the overall sound clash. Regrettably, I missed U.S. Roughnecks' performance, but for a while now I've been hearing all this hype about the band F-Minus, and finally I would get the chance to hear what they're all about. Well, F-Minus have given themselves their own grade. Although kids in the audience seemed to enjoy their style of music, to me their lack of clarity and harmony with vocals wasn't enjoyable. However, they were really energetic on stage and exhumed hard-core punk rock right out of their bodies!

Standing around and sitting all by myself, I was desperately waiting for Tiger Army to take over, but I was curious to see Roger Miret and the Disasters perform. For such a short set time, they really had it in them to let the crowd see what "punk" they have to offer. They were way better than F-Minus...but I don't think I'll be rushing to the record store to pick up their album.

Popular London Oi! band The Business was on next. The drummer was off the hook, and the rest of the musicians were so filled with passion that I was finally enjoying a band! I'm estimating that the singer is in his late 40s, yet he still has enough energy to scream his heart out. The audience was extremely involved in their performance, shouting along with the words and pumping their fists in the air. I think I'll go to the record store next paycheck!

Finally, the saviors of music were about to grace the stage. I was so overwhelmed by my overactive senses that took over my mind, body, and soul that I felt like I was all alone. It was just me and Tiger Army, no one else. Next to the time I was rapping to every song A Tribe Called Quest played during a show, this was one of the few times where I caught myself singing along to ALL the songs a band played. The first thing they mentioned was the return of Fred Hell. Tiger Army's drummer survived a disturbing occurrence and has fully recovered and is now back to drumming! The crowd



<TIGER ARMY>

DESTRUCTION MADE SIMPLE

1208

GROUNDING

LAST COLLAPSE

MAJOR MINORITY

April 3, 2004

@ Showcase Theatre (Corona, CA)
By Ian Wilkins

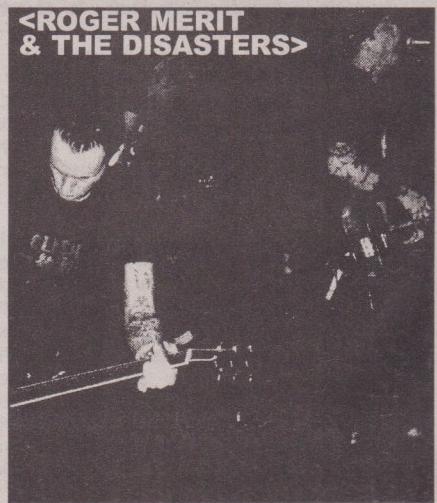
Showcase Theatre can hold probably around 300 people, and tonight it was holding roughly 10 percent of that (30 people) when Major Minority came out. Since it was a semi-early show, what can you expect, really? If you have ever heard the band The Distraught play, then just put some water behind their ears and you will have Major Minority. I learned later on in the evening that they were just getting back together and all was still in havoc. You never would have guessed from the show they put on—it was great. I can't wait for them to season up and take over. Check them out if you have the chance, and then tell your kids, "I remember when...."

By the time Major Minority was done, the Showcase Theatre had another 10 percent flow on in. Out of those 60 people, five of them were actually standing in front of the stage when Last Collapse came on, and everyone else was standing behind the guard rail. I thought maybe it was because Last Collapse was this crazy psycho band, but eventually I discovered it was probably because all the kids' parents were there. Sounding a lot like AFI or one of those other "boy" punk bands, Last Collapse didn't blow me away. They weren't bad, if you love MTV, and I am sure with the right manag-



<THE BUSINESS>

<ROGER MERIT & THE DISASTERS>



er they could go far. They were your usual four-piece band whose talent was only overshadowed by their stage show. Is that good? More than likely it is, if you ever want to make any money playing in a band. Were they good? Yeah...but that took a couple of seconds.

Grounded: dope band, dope sound, and the best of the night. Need I say more? I guess I do if I want to continue my career in writing. Grounded had it all: catchy, stuck-in-your-head lyrics that make the girls in the crowd stand starry-eyed, yet bass and guitar riffs that are still hard enough that the guys in the leather, studded jackets can still pound their fists and not be embarrassed. Playing a 40-minute set and finishing to the words "Encore, encore," Grounded was enlightening.

1208 has been around since 1995. How the hell could this band be on the Epitaph label? Playing a 30-minute set to just a few people, I was completely unimpressed; and from the people walking out the door, I would say they were, too. Your typical four-piece band with your typical sound, 1208 gave me your typical four-hour headache. Can you consider yourself a punk band and only sing about love? You probably can—but I think Blink 182 has the market locked. With a new Bad Religion on the way and the signing of Sage Francis, you can't hold this one against the Epitaph....or maybe you can. Destruction Made Simple simply annihilated my inner-ear cavity. The worst band of the night by far. Songs like "The End" and "Dollars" made me feel compelled to go to their Website and find out more information to give you. But their Website didn't work, so you don't get shit—just like I didn't get shit when I stayed around and listened to these kooky fuckers. I have no idea how long they have been around, but considering they were the headlining band, I am sure it has been a while (though I could be wrong). It is amazing to me how a band could waste their life like this. Is it about the music anymore, or is it about whatever fueled this band? It was all shit.

The first two bands of the evening were relatively new and are more than worth your time to go see. The latter two are nothing more than the machine pumping out more crap to infest your little ears. When you sign on to a major label that really doesn't care about you, this is the type of music you're going to get: long, way too thought out, and all about how your panties don't match your earrings—that sort of shit.

The Colour Lovedrug Controlling the Famous Say Anything From Satellite

April 6, 2004

@ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)
By Michelle your Belle Kandalaf

Dang I missed the first band again! Luckily one of the show goers filled me in on From Satellite. She explained they were a satisfying rock band. Their set was more than satisfactory for an opener, the only complaint given was the sound the vocals were significantly low. However I rarely blame the band for that.

Soon after began Say Anything's sound check, the random drum rolls queued me to get back to the stage. The set began with random hoots and hollers from the singer, which struck my interest. By the looks of the tight

brown polyester pants, worn by the singer (hot!), I knew I was in for a garage rock sound, and I was right. Foot taping, head shaking fun! I commend the drummer on his smooth drum rolls as well as the guitars' for his stage presence, tossing his guitar around like nobody's business. The singer's wide vocal range came into play during the third song "vector" hitting high notes and screams like a champ. It was the band's first time at Chain Reaction and I salute them having it be a good one. Happy birthday to the singer!

The Chain Reaction crowd suddenly grew and after seeing this next band, I understood why. Lovedrug the Ohio based indie rock quartet was simply breathtaking. Being newcomers added to the Militia Group family I expected them to be great but Singer Michael Shepard puts passion back into music. His voice emulates beauty, extremely strong yet so lovely at the same time. Michael feels the words he sings portraying this by rarely making eye contact with the crowd, he pounds the keys (keyboard) with his head down and eyes half shut it is truly heartwarming. The best song by far was the fifth song they played "Down Towards the Healing" the girl in me couldn't help but think, aawww he is singing to me, "you don't know how cool you are". Other than the amazing vocals the band was just as remarkable, their unquestionable concentration on the instruments was sensational which concludes in an incredibly clear sound. The band displayed steady beats with the song "Rock and Roll" a more melodic song that was definitely a crowd pleaser. Lovedrug is a band that does not have to be all over the stage to affect the crowd their music does it all. Needless to say I am now a huge fan. Like the previous band, it was Lovedrug's first show here and I was more than thrilled to be a part of it. I would like to thank Michael personally, it was more than a pleasure hanging out after the show, you are such a sweetie!

Controlling the Famous quickly took the stage. I have heard this band before being they are from LA but tonight I was not into them as much as the other bands. I did enjoy the singer's spastic moves, which added flare to the show. The songs sounded similar to one another, which made me uneasy about the set but at least the songs were not horrible so I was not too upset. Their ability to switch singers was commendable. An immense part of my lack of enthusiasm was that I was excessively anxious for the next band to come on.

THE COLOUR! Besides the fact that I want to marry each member I simplify adore this band. Each member brings a unique aspect to the band and together forms a perfect unit. The band opened the set with the song "St. Michelle" (I like to personally dedicate this song to myself every time I see them) the crowd was at last situated and this show looked extremely promising. The crowd felt the love from the band as bassist Sam Hollers back and forth telling us how good looking we were. As they rock out the next songs "Tambourine" and "Mirror Ball" the fans feet begin to be in motion, much like the singers (Wyatt is a dancing MACHINE). While the band played, I could not help but detect and adore the fact that a huge reason this band puts on a great show is that they love the each other as much as they love the music they play. Guitarists Dave and Luke constantly played toward each other feeding off one another, it was truly a wonderful thing. They played "Tailored Town" the perfect rim shots by

drummer Nathan make me so proud this guy doesn't miss a beat. At this point Chain Reaction turned into a dance party, after two more songs the band played "Clapham Junction" and with it came the dancing world of the Colour. The only down side at this point were the lame kids who deem dancing as pushing each other around. I would like to thank the two handsome boys behind me who truly know how to dance. The Colour finished their set with a new song "Driving Gloves" which was utter bliss. I even heard compliments about how great the song was, being given to the guitarist Luke by a fan after the show. All and all the Colour rocks my socks, this band is pure musical genius, a mix between the beach boys, the cure and pure dance madness cannot get any better!

THREE POISON THE WELL Darkest Hour moments in GRACE

April 8, 2004

@ The Ventura Theater (Ventura, CA)
By Luke Skywalker

Traveling up north past L.A. County lines for the first time for a show, I was a little apprehensive, but the trek to the freezing tundra known as VENTURA was well worth it. As I gazed on the Ventura Theater, I was quite impressed, and the inside was even more extraordinary. Decked out in an ol' timey theater décor, I was surprised to hear a grand sound system and see an elaborate set of lights overhead.

I quickly grabbed a rail to stand behind for the first band, Moments in Grace. Not exactly astonished by the alternative rock sounds of this band, I grew tired of their attempts to get the crowd motivated. I couldn't help but think to myself, "If this is the next trend of music, I'd rather have a fourth wave of ska." Playing songs from their repertoire that included "Stress," "Broken Promises," and "Don't Leave," they continued to receive undeserved applause from the young crowd. Sporadically in the middle of their last song, members from the other touring bands began to throw a barrage of trash at the playing musicians. This was just a glimpse of the greater battles that would occur the rest of the night.

Preparing for some hardcore from the next group, Darkest Hour, I was humorously surprised to find that they were more metalcore. Hard to take their music seriously, I sat back and enjoyed the show from the bleachers. Entering the stage in true metal fashion, each member marched to their positions with an instrument in one hand and a beer in the other. Their Bam Margera look-alike singer took several breaks between screams to spew beer from his mouth and rhetoric about free music-sharing and their loss of several thousand dollars in Canada. In their final effort, Darkest Hour performed "With Friends Like These" and invited a guest guitarist. This single invitation turned into an invite of anyone who happened to be holding a guitar at the time. 20 guitarists rushed the stage, all to fake guitar solos.

After such a slow night of just watching the

bands perform, I felt it was about time to head towards the stage and prepare my roundhouse kicks for some good hardcore from Poisn the Well. Soon the band began their set, and the crowd shoved forward, only to be shoved back. Unfortunately, the crowd was too wussy to actually dance and would only shove each other back and forth. But though I didn't know any songs by heart, I still had fun. Five songs into their set, I chose to head back to the seats, where I could see that the real hardcore dancing was on the second level; but by this time I already had a dead arm and swollen trachea. I was still able to enjoy the rest of Poisn the Well and got to view more on-stage antics of trash, paper airplanes, and food being thrown about.

As a Thrice banner rose from the stage up into the rafters, Thrice began their set with "Deadbolt". By this time, I assumed Thrice's set would be same set they've performed the last few times I've seen them: all songs from THE ARTIST IN THE AMBULANCE with the occasional oldie of "Deadbolt" and "See You in the Shallows"—but, yet again, I was surprised. For all the longtime Thrice fans, you would have been enamored by the playing of such a great oldie (and now rarity) "Phoenix Ignition," which lead singer Dustin Kensrue said would probably the last time it would be ever played. And for all the new hardcore fans of Thrice, a rare B-side was played for the first time live. Breaking between songs, Kensrue continuously thanked the crowd for coming out to the last show on the tour and plugged their sponsored charity, the Syrentha J. Savio Endowment. As Kensrue would get back into his singing groove, along came more clowning around, which included a makeshift puppet show and spit wads. For an encore/final, Thrice performed the fan favorite, "To Awake and Avenge the Dead"—and that's when the actual chaos broke out. Huge amounts of trash began to be thrown on stage, somersaults across the stage, and full-grown adults in toilet-paper diapers entered the stage, all in good humor to celebrate the final date of their two-week tour. Kensrue, who carried on the song throughout the anarchy, closed out the show carrying one of his tourmates off the stage on his back.

DARKEST HOUR CURL UP AND DIE RADIATION 4 WATCH THEM DIE

April 10, 2004
@ Chain Reaction (Anaheim, CA)
By Darren Davis

It was a cold Saturday night, and I arrived at Chain Reaction in Anaheim to a moderately packed house. Everyone seemed sort of dazed and tired as they stood around waiting for the first band to go on stage. A good 45 minutes passed after the doors opened before the show started.

Watch Them Die was the first band to go on. A train wreck hit as soon as they started playing, as this five-piece from Oakland, CA (who will be touring with Gwar in the near

future), let out some genuinely good thrash metal for the kids of Anaheim. Although the crowd wasn't really getting it, these guys were honestly fun to watch. Leading their onslaught was an oddly enthusiastic, slightly psychotic lead singer. He boxed the air, chanted nonsense, dug invisible graves on stage, and put imaginary firearms into his mouth. The songs utilized interesting quadruple vocal work, catchy guitars, and a powerhouse of a drummer. As the set dragged on, however, I began to grow weary of Watch Them Die. The songs spilled over onto each other and became one long, thrashing blob. Before I knew it, I was wishing they would just go away. However, these up-and-comers are a talent, and I'm sure I will be hearing more of them soon.

The most entertaining band of the night was Radiation 4. The Los Angeles-based quintet appeared suddenly on stage wearing white doctor coats and what appeared to be medical x-ray glasses. Lead singer Chris Negrete had set up a smorgasbord of little toys and electronics that he used to mess with his vocals, starting the set off by putting a little music box that played a strangely haunting lullaby next to the mic. Mixing elements of death metal, grind, and mathcore, Radiation 4's sound and stage presence was madness, which gave the crowd a little jump-start after the previous band. R4 is hard to describe with words, for it surpasses any type of logic and requires a sort of demented thinking to even follow. This is not because they are particularly technical and chaotic compared to a lot of bands in the same genre, but because they are astonishingly creative. Negrete "conducted" his band through about one complete song when their guitarists amp blew out. However, after about 15 minutes of awkward silences and bad jokes, the amp was replaced and R4 began again. They rounded out the set playing old favorites and new material, including the catchy "Tick Tock, Tick" off of their upcoming album WONDERLAND. But before long, R4's rather short set came to a close, leaving the kids a little disoriented.

Next up was the infamous Curl Up and Die. The four short, scrawny, white kids from Nevada took the stage in front of a rather docile crowd. I had decided during the previous set that there had to be something in the water, for everyone in Chain Reaction seemed half asleep. But leave it to Curl Up and Die to light a fire underneath Orange County's sleeping beauties. The quartet started off with a bang, playing the fan favorite "And Then the Robots Killed", following it up with songs off of THE ONLY GOOD BUG IS A DEAD BUG and BUT THE PAST IS NOT THROUGH WITH US. To my surprise, their set was rather disappointing. I expected more from the quartet I've heard so many good things about but never had the opportunity to see live. Their performance was dry and rather slow, lacking any sort of enthusiasm or passion. Their vocalist flailed around and went into controlled seizures, but most of the time he simply paced back and forth reciting his lyrics. There was some crowd participation—more so than the two previous bands—but for the most part, Curl Up and Die seemed tired and bored.

It was then up to death metal/thrash/ punk quintet Darkest Hour (featuring Mike

Schleibaum and Kris Norris on guitar, Paul Burnette on bass, John Henry on vocals, and Ryan Parrish on drums) to somehow get things moving. For the first time that night, the crowd seemed pumped and excited. We had to wait for a camera crew to construct sets of floodlights around the stage, for they were filming for a DVD. This was an annoyance at first, but the second Darkest Hour began playing, all else was forgotten. As if a giant, sweaty, death-metal finger has been snapped in front of their faces, the crowd erupted into an absolute frenzy. Within the first song, a pit had opened up, kids were crowd-surfing (much to the dismay of Chain Reaction) and singing along. I was impressed. Darkest Hour carried themselves in a way in which you just wanted to join in on the madness. Henry was charismatic, loud, and animated—everything a vocalist should be. He led the crowd in a series of sing-alongs and pushed them head on into every crushing blow of the well-placed breakdowns. I watched in awe as Schleibaum and Norris worked their magic, showcasing some very impressive guitar work. Their set was vast, playing songs from THE MARK OF JUDAS and HIDDEN HANDS OF A SADIST NATION. Sadly, it was all over seemingly as quickly and violently as it began, bringing a very satisfying close to a otherwise dreary night.

SIX FEET UNDER CATTLE DECAPITATION RED CHORD BURY YOUR DEAD

April 11, 2004
@ Epicentre (Mira Mesa, CA)
By Thomas Murray
Photos by David Small

The Epicentre was sprinkled with a typical attendance of hardcore fans. Some were stretching out and shadow-boxing, others stared at the walls, trying to look disturbed. On Broken Wings robotically tuned their instruments, soaking in the feverish anticipation of the crowd. All of a sudden their gig was underway, and the floor of the Epicentre looked like a kung-fu movie. A ring of the shy and overweight kids (myself included) surrounded the floor, which was full of kids' flailing windmill arm attacks at each other. It was insane. The band was respectable but nearly impossible to pay attention to with all the teenagers attacking one another. The band lost more attention when half of the crowd wandered toward the merch booth to ponder some unexplainable mishap that left some guy laying amongst scattered T-shirts and CDs. People searched for answers, but no one was talking.

Bury Your Dead's music provoked the same frenzied intensity from the savage audience. During the first song, some unfortunate soul was on the receiving end of a cartwheel gone wrong. He absorbed not only a heel to the jaw, but also a boot to the gut. A few of the undersized scenester bouncers rushed over and offered assistance, but the kid just needed to walk it off. This band's performance was more interesting to watch. The far left of the stage held a large guitarist in an Earth Crisis jersey and a bassist sporting plain clothes. The other guitarist, in gym shorts and a black golf hat, fought back smiles and sneers while artistically trying to tear the strings off his guitar. Vocalist Matt Brusco, in a simple, white T-

<SIX FEET UNDER>



shirt, had the microphone cord wrapped so tightly around his arm that it became progressively deeper blue as the set continued. The last song was enthusiastically dedicated to the other bands, and then "secretly" dedicated to the straight-edge community. Brusco threw his arms up in an "X" as around 15 fans rushed the stage. They all went nuts, climbing over each other in hopes of getting their shot at the microphone. The song ended in chaos, as the pile of bodies was sorted out and everyone returned to staring at the walls and wrestling in the corners.

Guy Kozowyk of The Red Chord was shrieking into the microphone before anyone had time to prepare themselves. He pointed the bottom of the mic out toward a crowd that surged in immediate response. A blue vein in his neck seemed to be pulsating with the bass drum, and he leered out at the audience as volume increased. Before the third song, we learned the true story behind that earlier mishap behind the merchandise booth. It seems that the merch guy from The Red Chord had savagely dropped BYD's merch guy on his head. Why he did this was not important. Kozowyk demanded a circle-pit halfway through "Antman", and the audience responded obediently with a circular swarm of swinging elbows. "Dreaming in Dog Years" was the last song of the set, a set which ended in similar fashion to BYD's: the audience scrambled for the microphone as it became lost in a tangle of around 20 bodies. Kozowyk didn't even bat an eye when he lost the microphone. The band played on and he continued to scream his final verses into the stale air of the Epicentre, much to the amusement of those not involved in the fight to be heard. San Diego-based Cattle Decapitation ripped right into their first song like a starving artist into a free burrito, but the set went limp due to a lack of duct tape. The stage became quiet

<BURY YOUR DEAD>



and motionless. The singer reassured everyone that this happens at every show, but no one cared: they wanted their metal, not excuses. The band offered an apology in the form of "Testicular Manslaughter", and all was forgiven. During the third song, "Reduced to Paste", the bassist's eyes became more and more hollow and empty, like he was growing insane as the music continued. He massaged his bass apologetically, as though he had just thoroughly scolded it right before the show. This band is hardcore gore metal through and through—and their fans love them for it.

Chris Barnes took the stage with Six Feet Under, in what should have been the most anticipated event of the evening. The former lead singer of Cannibal Corpse was throatng death-metal lyrics while everyone else was still spraying mud in their Huggies. For some reason, only 30 or 40 people remained, but the minimal audience didn't bother Barnes. He joked about the "intimate setting" and went on to gargele and roar his way through a few of the tracks off of their newest album, BRINGER OF BLOOD. His vocals were a little too low and was unjustly overpowered by the guitars of Terry Butler (formerly of Death) and Steve Swanson, but no one regretted staying the extra half-hour, especially the old-school fans, who were easily identified by their T-shirts declaring a hate for everything and promotion of the casual consumption of human flesh. Six Feet Under brought the heavy and then disappeared off stage, back into social obscurity.

THE ZIGGENS CHRIS PAUL OVERALL THE BUSSTOP HURRICANES BRODII SPLIT

April 13, 2004
at the House of Blues (Anaheim, CA)
By Gregory Moore

The trio Brodii Split opened the show, and right away it was clear that Mickey Mouse was the sound man and that those big ears don't work too well, because, despite a good balance, everything was WAY too loud. Anyway, maybe 100 people got to enjoy your standard trio stage presence behind somewhat Green Day-ish songs with less punch even simpler lyrics ("I wanna be somebody else / Whoa whoa woh," etc.). One song was seemingly based on a chord progression you sometimes hear organists playing during baseball games (the one where everybody claps three times after the last three notes: [...] dum-dum-dum [clap-clap-clap]). But, listen, they played

fine—I'm just not their audience. They're featured on one of the SKRATCH comps, and you can check them out at www.brodilsplit.com.

Third up (see below for the second band) was Chris Paul Overall backed by a band whose name I didn't catch, amounting to the basic rock trio + keys (joined at the end of their set by another guitarist, a "friend of the band" or something). I thought maybe I was in for a bit of a treat, because their opener featured a nice thumping drum intro and an even better outro, the last notes of the song hanging in the air as the drums steadily beat away...but that was the highlight. I don't think "If I ever get outta here / I'm going to New York City" is worth repeating a couple dozen times in one song, and cheap-sounding keyboard settings inspired me write "yikes" twice in my notes. "This is never really over at all," went the refrain of another song many, many times. Is this emo, I wondered. Someone told me they're doing sort of a Dashboard Confessional kind of thing, just not too well. I don't know. I will say this: this Overall dude has a voice that projects. Still, they didn't get much of a response from the crowd. Does that tell you something? I don't know. Find out for yourself at www.chrispauloverall.com.

The Ziggens were the headliners, taking the stage at 10:30 to about 250 people. The quartet (two guitars) came out in tetra-colored jumpsuits, looking "like we were visited by 'Queer Eye for the Asbestos-Removal Guy'." Putting aside the quibble that the main feature of such an outfit would be gas masks, this gives you some idea. It also gives you an indication of their humor, which their music is all about. I jotted "slapstick if The Pixies are dark comedy" while costumed members (one as Gumby) of the second band (I said fucking see below!) danced up a storm behind the guys as they pounded out a song called "Gilligan" (yes, THAT one)—my metaphor applying even more to their music itself than their lyrics. Speaking of the lyrics, a sample: "I'm gonna get some plastic surgery [Music stops; in a 'funny voice:] Oh my God, the pain!"; "I have dandruff / I have dandruff." They were tight, featured many four-part harmonies, and often sounded much like Too Much Joy (although I didn't hear anything as lovely as "Crush Story" in the mix (not that they were trying for anything like that)). But let me tell you: they got a GREAT response from the crowd; and there's no doubt in their high energy. This was silly, corny, stupid music to skank to, and none of their fans were disappointed. During a mosh pit, a drunk (or so I was told) girl fell and got a bloody head, but The Ziggens persevered while she lay on the floor, hammering through a cover of Judas Priest's "Breaking the Law". Hey, it wasn't THEIR fault she got hurt (she was okay, anyway). These guys are pros and had a good time. They've got

<THE RED CHORD>



<CATTLE DECAPITATION>



several albums available, and you can check them out in plenty of places on the Web (enough so that I'm not sure which to direct you to).

I came for the second band, The Busstop Hurricanes, so they get the biggest piece of my pie. This sextet (two guitars, bass (a stand-up most of the time), drums, keys, singer) was, by far, the least like the others on the bill, featuring a swank swing melded with surf rock. Think the lounge act in a Rat Pack movie if it were directed by David Lynch. They got to play only seven songs—the durational equivalent to the first and shortest of their usual three-set night when I've seen them at the Continental Room in Fullerton (which they play as often as twice a month)—but they made the most of them. Taking the stage in their slick hepcat attire (though the keyboardist lacked a collared shirt), so the overall effect was slightly incomplete; but bonus points for the color-coordinated Strats), as always they delivered a perfectly-measured and tight performance, wearing their playfully aloof collective veneer and shimmying all the while. One of the particular highlights was the fourth song, "Re-entry", a gentle, mid-tempo alt-pop number. Even though this one is not a paradigm of their stuff, I suspect that if they ever get their LONG-awaited full-length out there, this is the crossover single. But it was the closer, "Monte Carlo"—a paragon of the TBH aesthetic—which really brought the house down. Singer Sammy Tonic took his wireless out onto the floor, and guitarist Twisty Lemons (the only gal on tonite's bill) drew a rousing ovation with her solo as she maneuvered between the floor monitors to the extreme front of the stage. Fans were won on this night. I hope more people get wind of TBH, because they're doing their own thing, and doing it just about perfectly—and a lot of people out there will appreciate it. Check this band out if you want something other than just predictable progressions of power chords, yelling as the main way to generate energy, and sweaty young guys bobbing their heads as they hack away for the mosh pit. There's a place for that, but there's more to life. Find out more about what I'm saying at www.busstophurricanes.com.

BUDWEISER TRUE MUSIC TOUR: STORY OF THE YEAR LETTERKILLS LUCKY BOY'S CONFUSION ADAIR

April 13, 2004
@ Odeon Concert Club (Cleveland, OH)
By Kevin Conway

Adair, a five-piece hailing from St. Louis, took the stage and unleashed a fury in a lingering haze of orange and green illumination. The guitarists were blazing with a crunching roar, and the pounding bass and drums poured through the air like rolling thunder. The lead singer attacked the microphone and the crowd with raw emotion, emitted blood-curdling screams of elation intercalated with eerie harmonies. The crowd was still pouring in as Adair attacked the stage. Adair did not let a packed venue of hands in pockets keep them from putting on a stunning light display to bathe their intense stage presence. Harmonies poured from the singers, accompanied by a steady rage of guitars and bass. Adair drove some life into the crowd with "The Ghost of Who We Were", while the pounding drums and guitars erupted the pit. Dueling guitars spewed intense riffs and solos through the darkened stage and led to an

intense drum solo. After seconds of firing drums, the screaming vocals broke through once again. Adair blended the ending of the song directly into the thrashing guitar opening of "The Diamond Ring." Exploding force and intensity marked the finale, as members of Story of the Year mounted the stage to help scream the emotional finale.

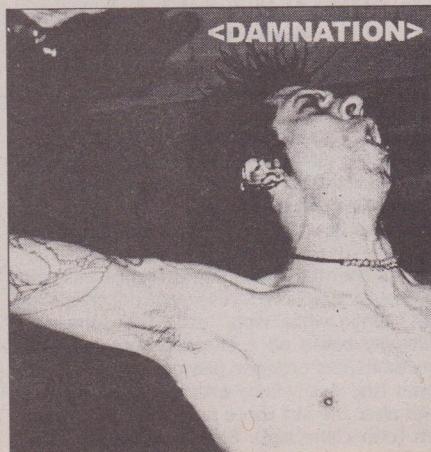
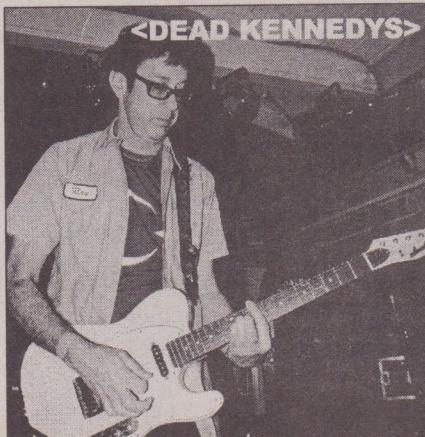
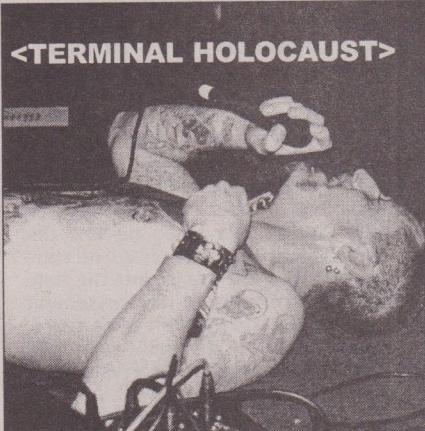
The lights dimmed once again, and drums and guitars started wailing. They came together with rolling bass lines and the harmonies of lead singer, Stubhy. The crowd was much more receptive to Lucky Boy's Confusion from Chicago and their poppier sound. Stubhy serenaded the crowd, as high-school girls squealed and pogoed (even though they were most definitely unaware of what the pogo was). Rapping vocals were juxtaposed with harmonies and catchy choruses. Peppy guitars and bouncing bass lines kept the crowd entertained. The young crowd kept their rock 'n' roll signs in the air, even though the sound was far from. Mohawks and black T-shirts were no disguise for this cookie-cutter, pop-punk five-piece. Simple Plan and Good Charlotte fans had to watch out for yet another boy band wielding instruments and disguised in dark attire and. Long pauses between songs slowed the performance and watered down the intensity, until "On Top of the World" began. This song kept the fans screaming every word and kept the heads bobbing. The parents of teens and pre-teens were up and bobbing along to the poppy sound, thinking they could finally relate to the younger punk generation. However, the emotion picked up, and the instruments finally began to roar as Stubhy began to fill his words and voice with raw emotion. The pop was left out of this rock, and no longer was harmony on the bill. Screams and rage spewed into the microphone and soared out of the amplifiers.

Letterkills took the stage and went from slowly tuning their instruments directly into a vocal and instrumental explosion. Harmonies and gut-wrenching screams were driven by the pounding drums and raging guitars. Minor pauses and guitar solos poured pure rock 'n' roll into the amplifiers, as strobe lights illuminated the vibrant stage. Lead singer Matt Shelton demanded the eyes of everyone in the crowd, as he writhed and rocked across the stage. "Whatever It Takes" pushed forward with rock 'n' roll guitars, while screams and harmonies flowed into a steady progression of intensity. The chorus exploded with lightning-fast drums, building up to the screams and cries of Shelton. The crowd could not help but move to the emotion that was pouring out of the speakers. Pop-punkers of the earlier sets were migrating toward back as the eclectic sound demanded the attention of avid music-lovers.

With no break between songs, "Teach Me to Live" started with drums firing like machine guns and guitars wailing to accompany the vocal rage. Sheer energy was emitted from the speakers and demanded movement from all in attendance. The music took over the entire venue, as all watched the intense finale of writhing, gut-wrenching screams.

At the moment Letterkills finished, the crowd chanted for Story of the Year. The lights dimmed, the crowd screamed, and everyone pushed forward to get as close to the stage as possible. An anticipatory buzz filled the air, the drums kicked, and the band sprinted on to the stage. "The Hero Will Drown" started, and the crowd sang along to every word. Guitars crunched, and Dan Marsala's voice echoed screams and gut-wrenching cries that were added to the mesmerizing harmonies. The words, "It's time to fucking rock" were screamed over the microphone, as the four in front began to jump and kick in unison. There was a minor pause in between songs, and the emotional beginning of "Anthem of Our Dying Day" was accompanied by the entire crowd singing the harmonic intro. This quickly turned into an intense explosion of vocals and instruments that quickly melted into the beginning of "Falling Down". The tracks exploded one into the other, with the explosive finale of "In the Shadows" causing a near riot within the venue. The pit had seeped into the entire masses of the crowd and waves of elbows and fists were plunging into the near-rabid crowd.

Josh Wills started a drum solo that launched the encore. Marsala ran to the microphone and screamed, "It's time to get fucking metal," as Story of the Year tore into their own rendition of "Enter Sandman". HEADBANGER'S BALL would have been jealous of the power that screamed out of the amplifiers to conclude this powerful show.





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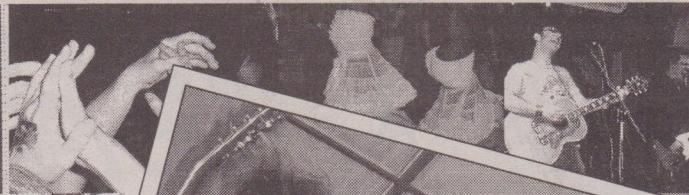
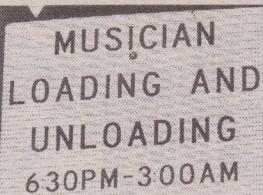


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Unknown in Austin

Text by Scott Andresen

Photos by Scott Presant and Scott Andresen



Three days in hot and sunny Austin, Texas. Smelling like a college after hours, Austin is part left over pizza and part music nirvana. Welcome to South by Southwest.

Thursday

It was fitting that Paris, Texas was the first band of the night playing at the New Line Records showcase. Two thoughts: they're from Madison, Wisconsin; the singer is a drama queen. He loves the stage—and it was refreshing to watch him move around and at least put on a show—but there was something about them that didn't quite add up. Its sound was tolerable, garage-rocky and unrefined, not much new here. Solid musicianship, solid sound. No time to stick around for the next band though, have to run down the street and see the Lookout Records showcase at the Blender Bar.

There's a goal here. See bands. Many bands. Must accomplish this goal. And eat pizza. Myriad slices of pizza.

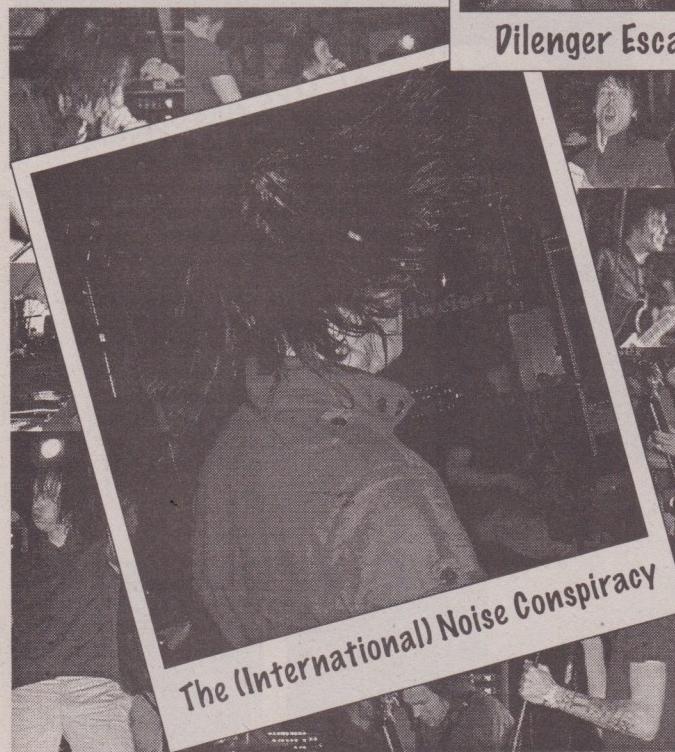


Dilenger Escape Plan



The Reputation, from Chicago, was on.

Led by front woman Elizabeth Elmore, they played a solid set of alt-country influenced melodic rock, with a touch of punk thrown in for good measure. No complaints here.



Moved on again, to see LA-based Earlimart playing at Exodus. Again, solid. Earlimart was very polished—it's like when you hear something impressive, regardless if you like it or not, you have to admit it's good. Dripping with psychedelic pop and melancholy, Earlimart put on an impressive set.

Friday

The Fat Wreck Chords and Punk Voter "Rock Against Bush" showcase at Emo's (the premiere punk club in Austin). Hosted by Jello Biafra. First up, Chicago-based Lawrence Arms. Another solid band to add to the solid bands list. Sounding pop-punk, more punk than pop, the Lawrence Arms were perfect to get this Get-Out-The-Vote show started, peppering talk politics in between songs. Next, Gainesville, Fla.-based Against Me! played. Obviously it was punk, but the crowd was so loud, they almost drowned out the band. Then David Cross, of HBO's "Mr. Show with Bob and David" fame, did stand up. Laughed. Laughed some more. Gave quizzical look. And laughed. Then left. Oh, NOFX headlined the show, but didn't stick around. Wanted



Earliwartz



but without Saturday, this trip would have been a slight disappointment. Your Enemies Friends, International Noise Conspiracy, Your Enemies Friends again, and The Defectors (did I mention Your Enemies Friends?). Remember those names.

Walking around 6th Street (the main drag for SXSW) trying to figure out what band to see. Pleasant sounds came from Emo's Annex (a fenced in parking lot passing itself off as a club). It's like watching a movie and seeing unexpected nudity. Jackpot. You're living life, walking around, and then something happens that changes your life, or in this case, your weekend. That was Your Enemies Friends from Los Angeles. After two days at SWSW, they were the first band that kicked ass. Giving a whole new outlook to the rest of the weekend—a refreshing breath of punk.

Anyway, walking into the annex (genius move by Emo's to convert a parking lot into a venue), Your Enemies Friends was injecting the crowd with their version of punk—and a righteous version it was, and it was only 2 in the afternoon. They totally re-energized everything that SXSW should be. Finding a kick-ass band when you least expect it. They play like a band should play, with nothing to lose, all over the stage, jumping up and down, almost falling over the



t o

catch Polyphonic Spree at Stubb's.

Walked down the block to Polyphonic Spree. And when I say walked down the block, I literally mean walked down the block. There's like 40 bars within an 8-block radius. Completely mind blowing.

Back to Polyphonic Spree (which, by the way, is a fantastic name). Polyphonic Spree played the ASCAP showcase. Caught the last 10 minutes of its set. Stage was completely full with band members, a choir and those kids from "How's Your News?", that handicapped-anchored news show. They were singing the theme song to the show, but the place was packed and it was hard to tell exactly what was going on. But it was Polyphonic Spree.

Trekked down the block to catch the Suicide Girls Burlesque Act at Emo's Annex. What's a trip away from home without some strippers? Okay, burlesque dancers. But the way these chicks danced, it was less burlesque and more stripper. In all honesty, this was just a cheap way to strip and still be considered artsy. Nothing more—except tape-covered nipples and punk music. It wasn't even sexy. And isn't that the point of burlesque? Less flesh and more imagery?

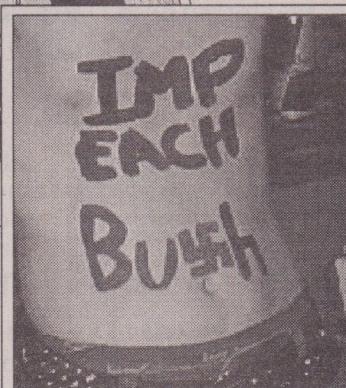
Saturday

This is when things got good. And by things, I mean music.

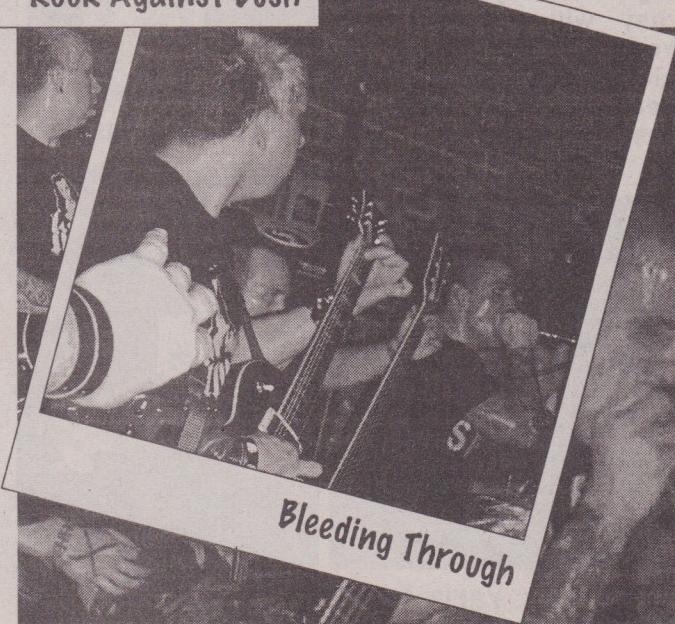
Not to dis Thursday or Friday, but Saturday totally redeemed this trip. Thursday and Friday were solid,



Jello



Rock Against Bush



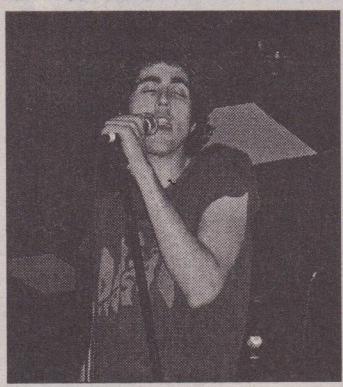
Bleeding Through

monitors, and each other. Just a fun band to watch (even if you're not into the music). And that's what makes a band more than solid, when their music is good and their live show is even better. Not only did Your Enemies Friends crank out some hard yet melodic punk, they found time to destroy every band in their path—they totally blew the following band, The Rocket Summer, off stage (who followed them)—even though the crowd loved TRS, singing their songs and giving their lead singer a break on one song (he invited some fans on stage to sing). Not to go on a rant here, but The Rocket Summer is like bubble gum, looks good, smells good, but loses its flavor after a couple of chews.

Alas, another showcase was calling, the Take Action party. Back to Emo's. This is where everything fell into place.

The (International) Noise Conspiracy. The best band of the week—hands down. Socialist rock, hard rock, punk rock, garage rock, just plain ole' rock, they've got it all. All wrapped up into a nice palatable anthem-esque style. Isn't that what everybody wants and needs? Swedish rock. And anthems. Lead singer Dennis Lyxzén is the quintessential frontman; part Mick Jagger, part circus performer—pushing the crowd to the musical edge, and roping them back in. They vowed to never come back to the US if we re-elected Bush. "Fuck Bush."

Dillinger Escape Plan followed. Holy shit, I was not prepared for this. Anger issues, total chaos, crowd participation, loudness, great musicianship, gutteral sounds. Did I mention holy shit? Every show must be the band's personal form of therapy. In-freakin'-tense. I guarantee you that they will lose you. You'll be following along, banging your head, screaming, "Shit yeah," and then out of



Paris, Texas



Paris, Texas



Gito Gito Hustler



The Lawrence Arms



The Reputation

nowhere, you're lost. They go off on some off-timed tangential musical journey, and about 30 seconds later, they come back around and you're with them again. Metal never sounded so good. You could have this band on mute and enjoy it—hardcore and insane. They take progressive rock to a whole new level.

Checked out sound check at Pyramids. Met Gito Gito Hustler, an all-girl punk band from Japan. Friendly,

although I couldn't understand them. They didn't speak English, but they had a translator, and they were more than willing to pose for pictures. But they did play some catchy pop punk tunes (again, couldn't understand a word).

Took a well-deserved break from bands. Stopped at Hoek's Pizza Joint on 6th Street, affectionately referred to as the "punk rock pizza joint," for the umpteenth time. Part of the eat-pizza goal.

Tried to get into the Hives show at Emo's. Doorman was a jackass, as they're prone to be. Needless to say, I didn't get in, so tried down the street at Stubb's—Old 97s and Los Lobos. Line around the corner. Ended up at the Blender Bar and caught the last few minutes of Minibar. Solid alt.country, roots rock sound. Moved from there to see Your Enemies Friends again. Like a junkie, I needed my fix. That did the trick. Caught last 20 minutes of their set. Recharged and moved on to the Danish and Norwegian showcase at The Drink.

It's not every day that you get to see authentic Vikings. Caught the last four songs from the Defectors, whose singer looks like a Viking, standing 6 foot 6. I saw the third of my official "they redeemed my SXSW experience" bands. This Aarhus, Denmark-based band is garage rock, 60s rock, surf rock. The perfect band to sum up the SXSW experience: International, unknown and groovy.

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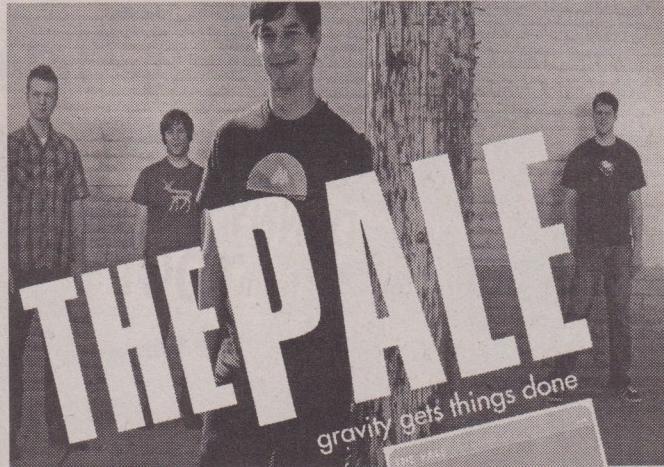


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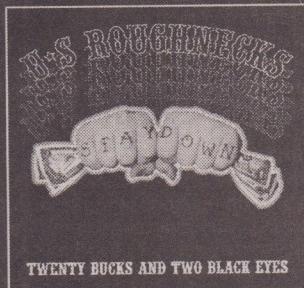
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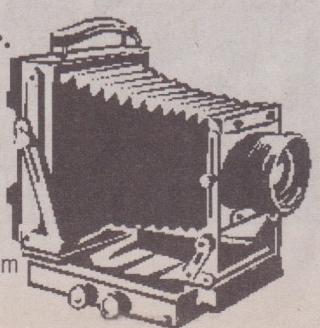
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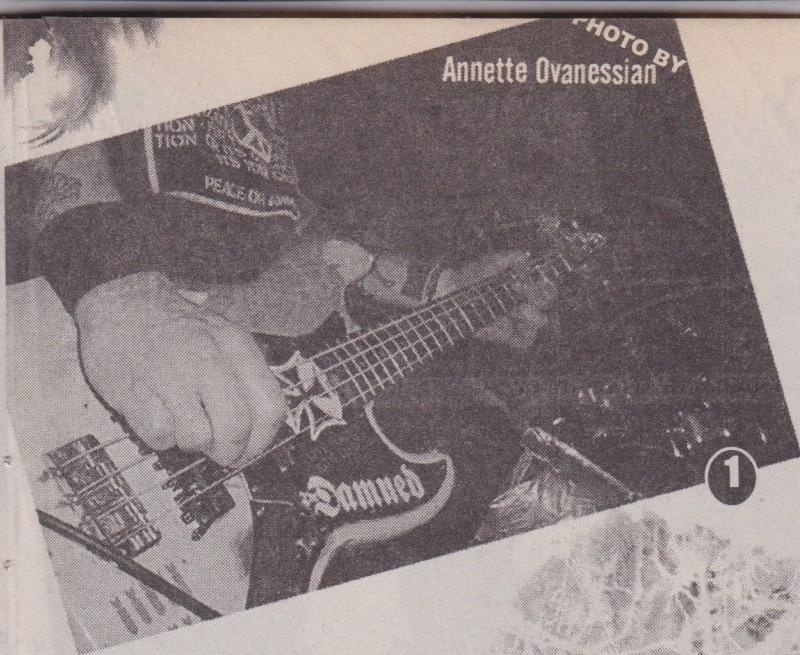


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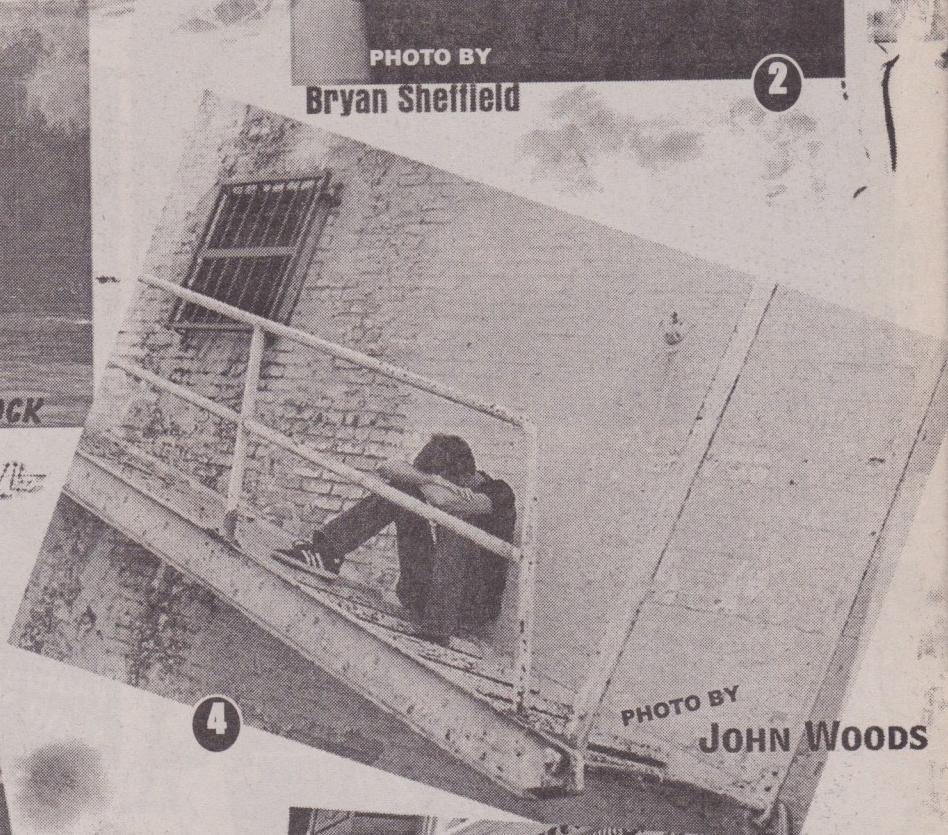
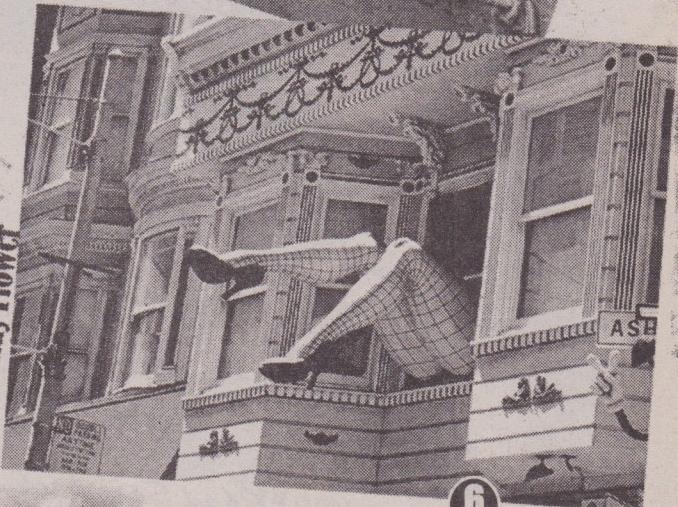
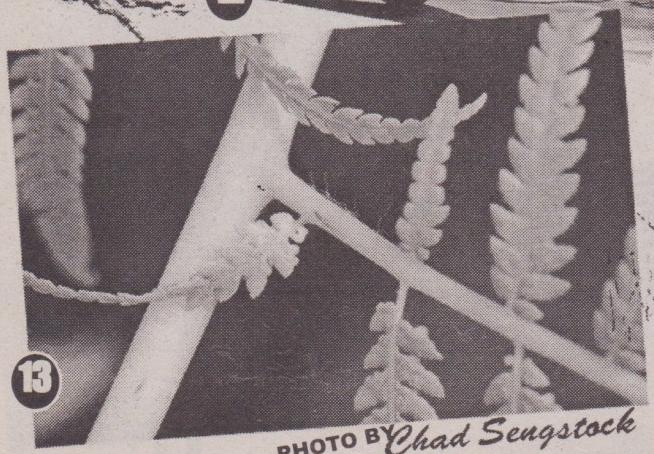
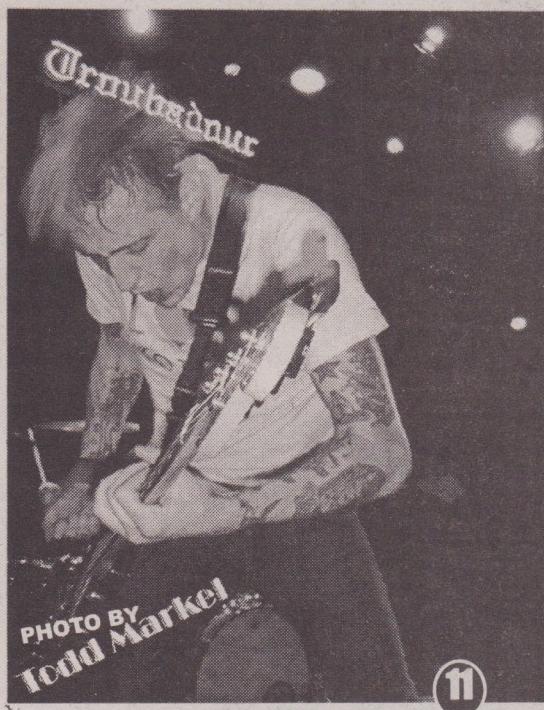
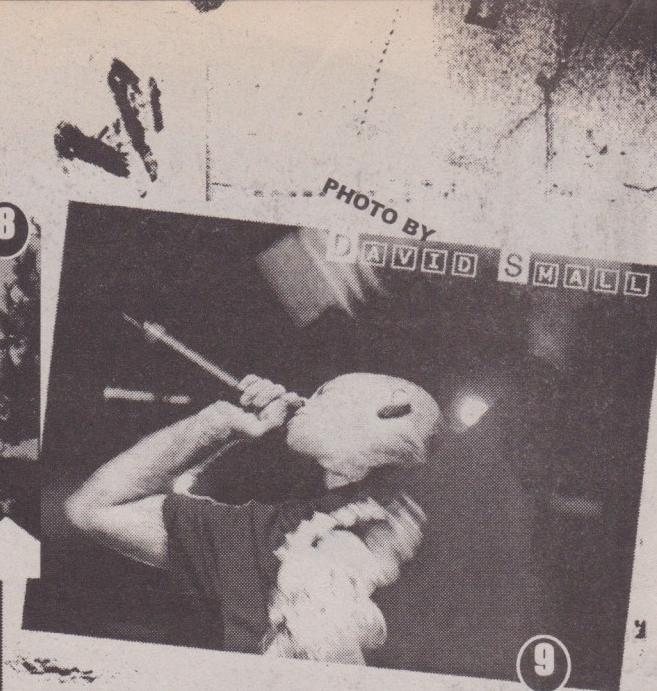


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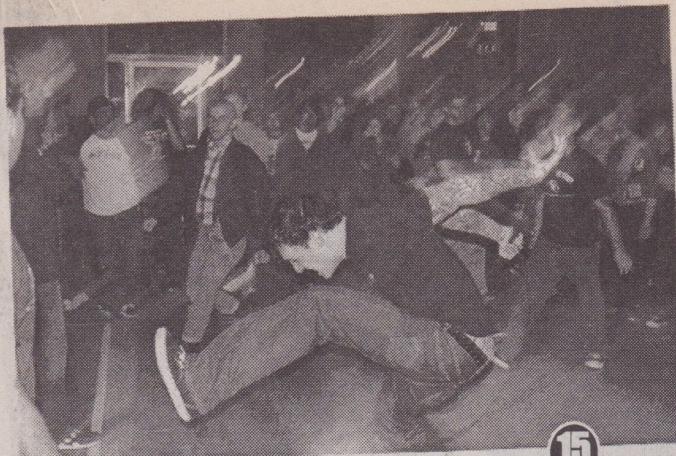
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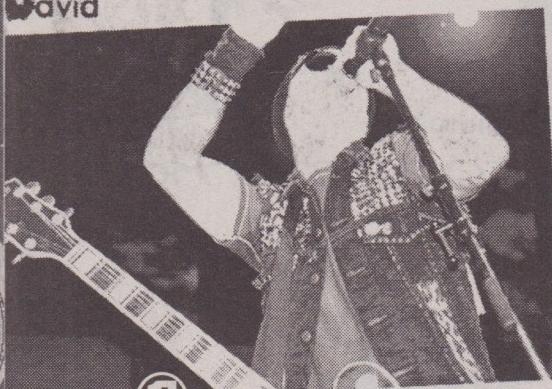
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Small

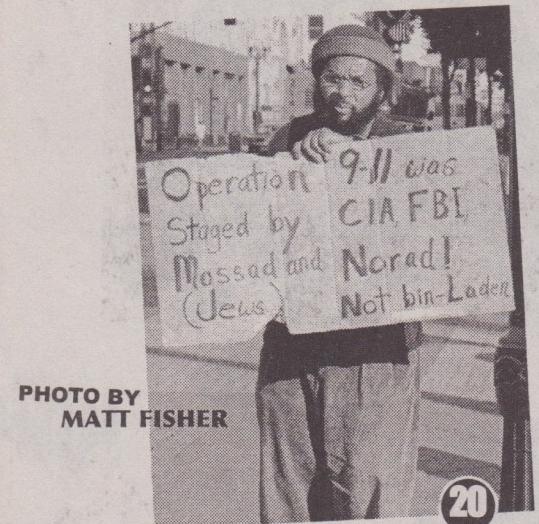


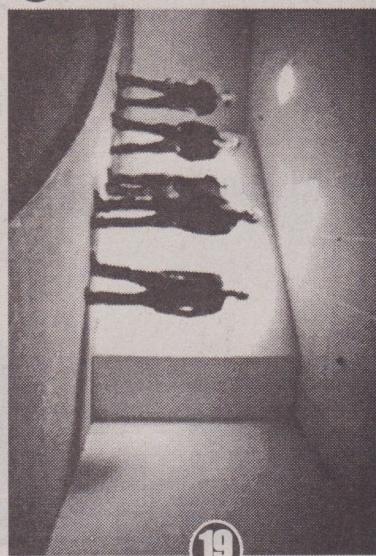
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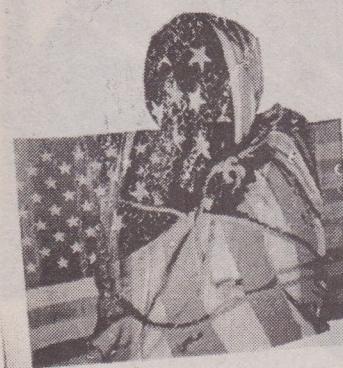
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15.the deal 16.vgs 17.transplants 18.the scarred 19.isis 20.homeless guy 21.swim 22.midnight creeps

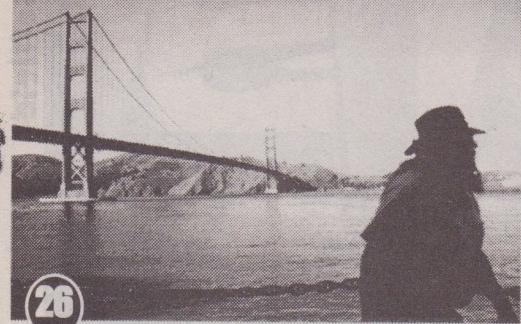
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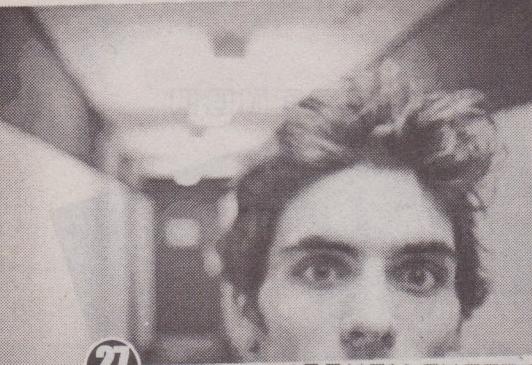
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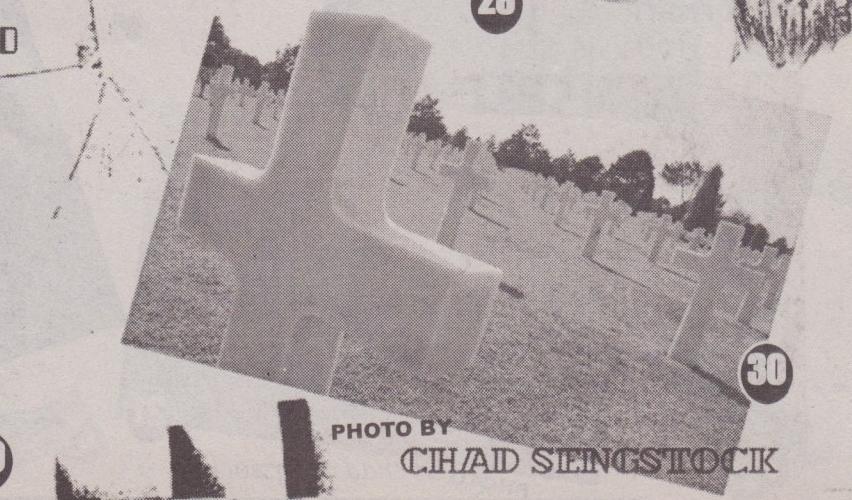


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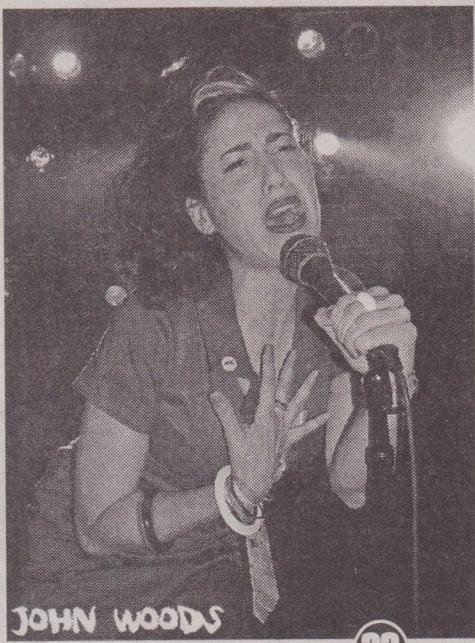
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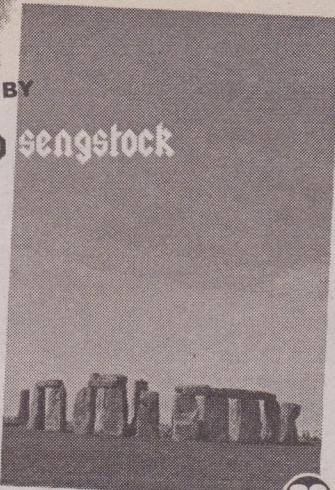
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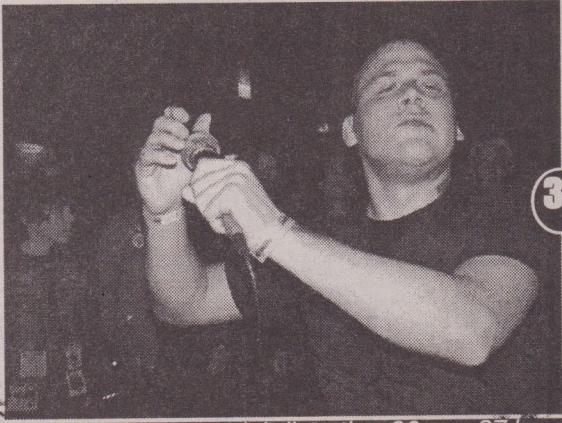
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31.the deal 32.stonehenge 33.dancehall crashers 34.scenic 35.social distortion 36.war 37.bronx



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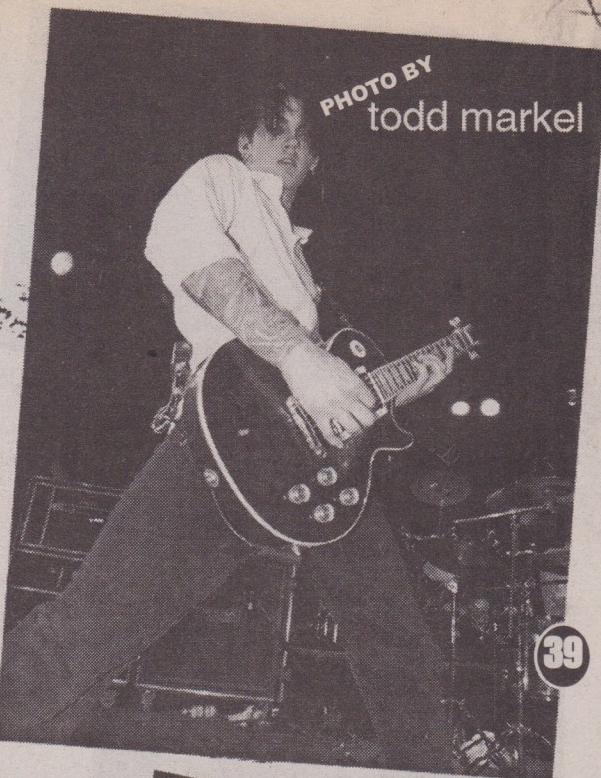
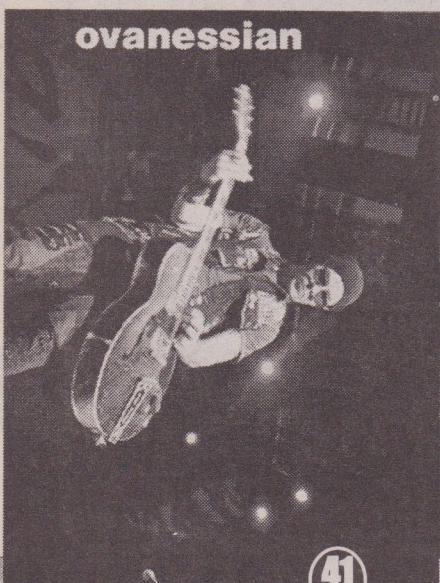
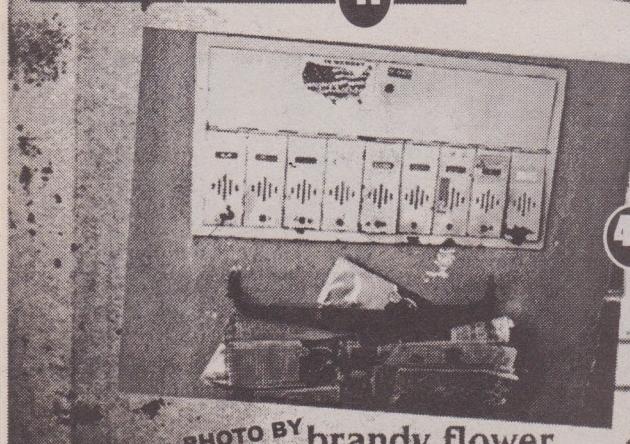


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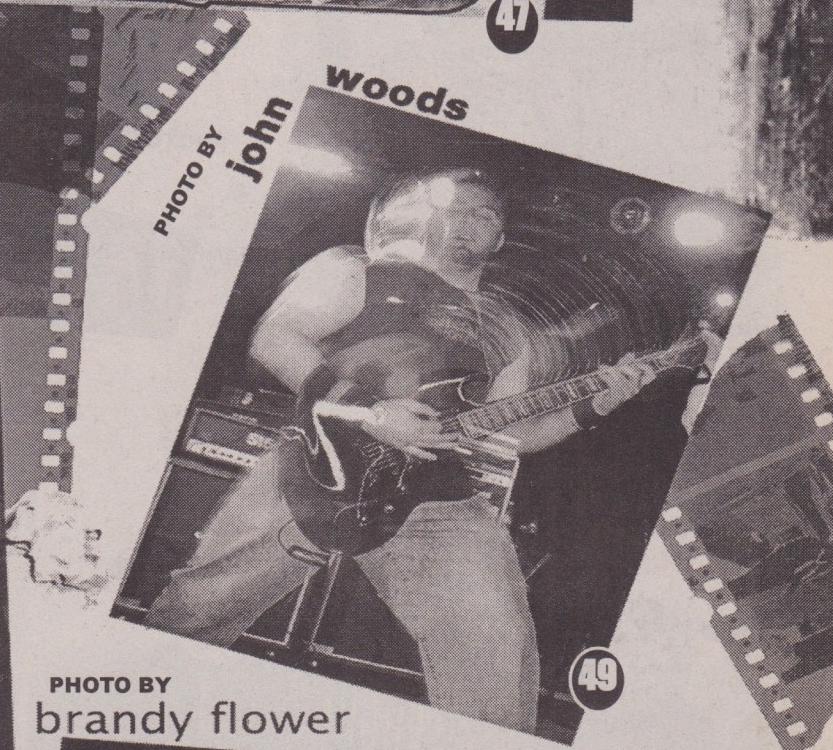
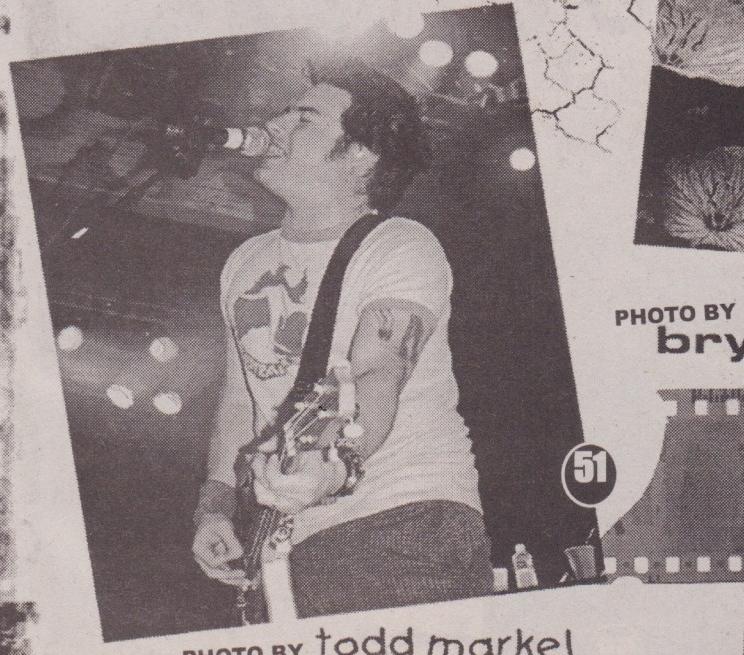


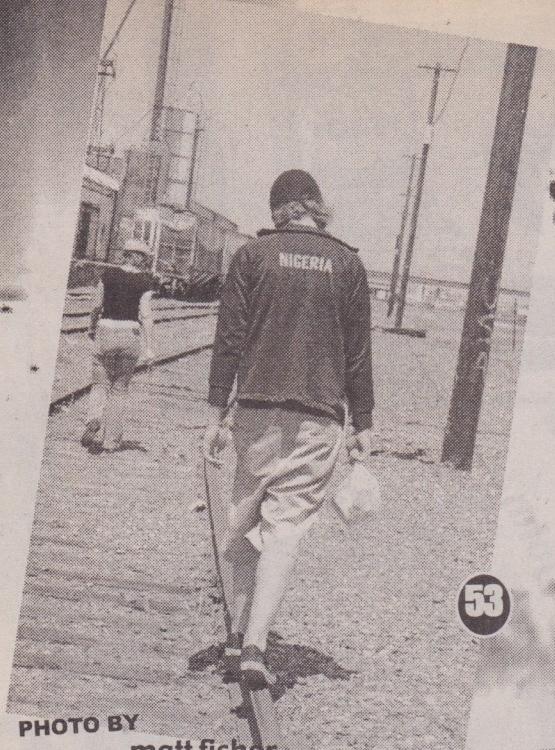
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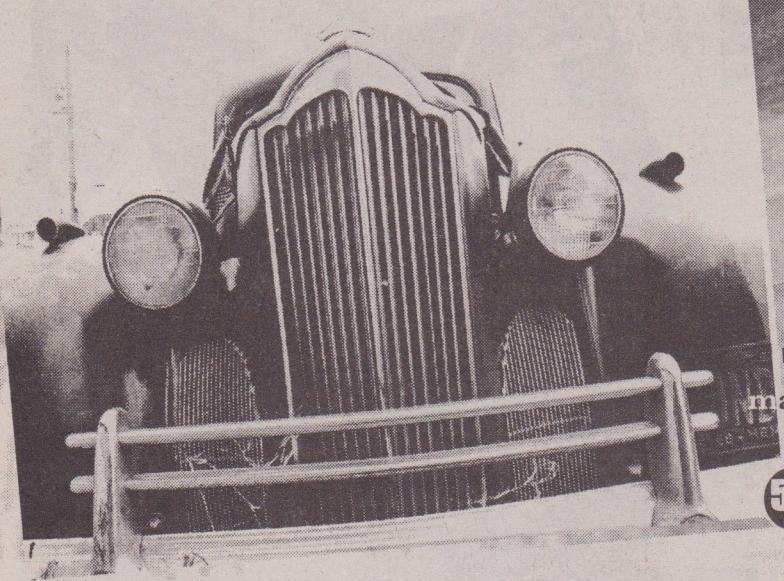
46.marcelo 47.sticks 48.these arms are snakes 49.sinai beach 50.flowers 51.fat mike 52.limbeck



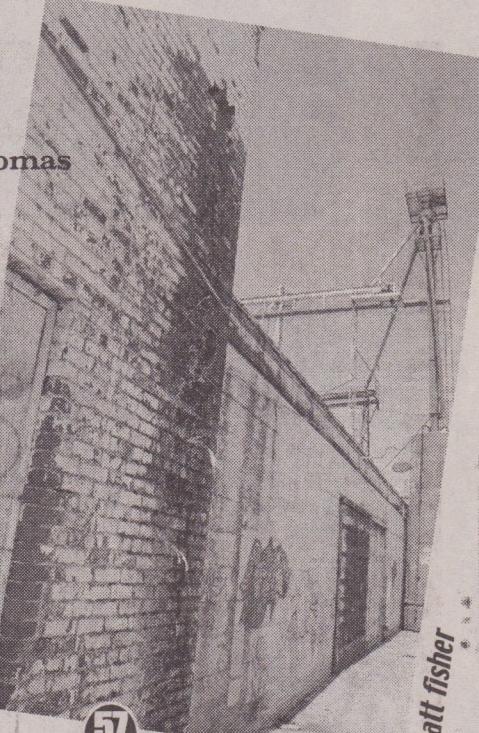
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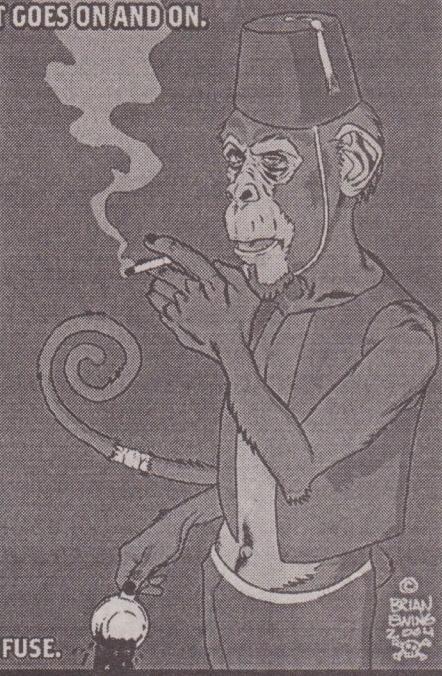
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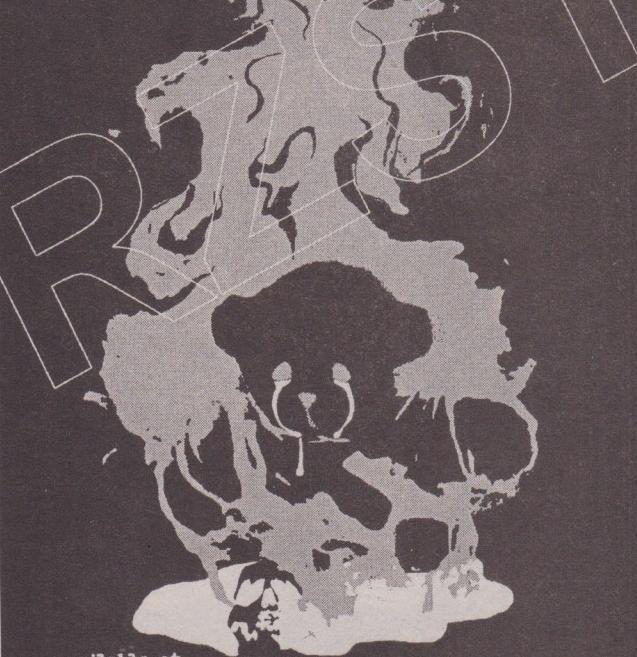
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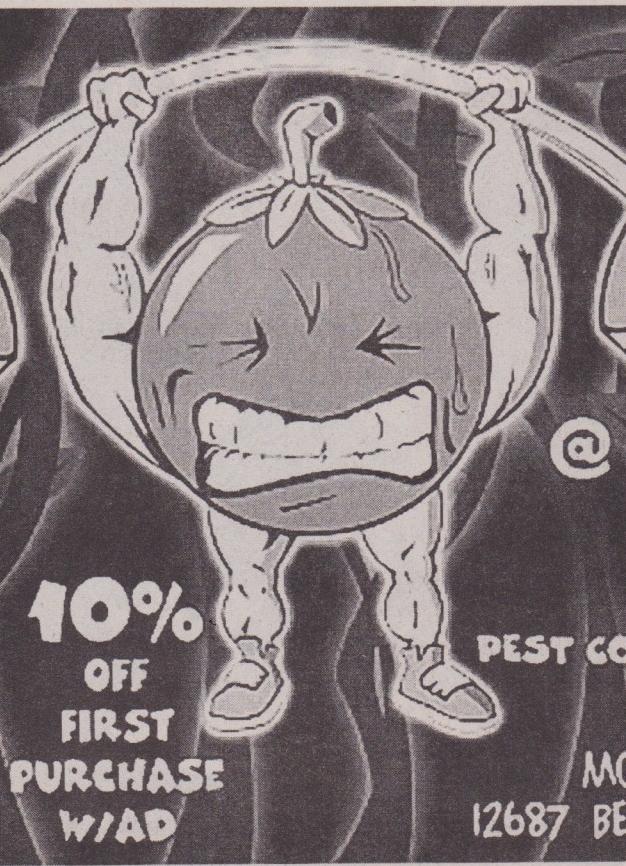
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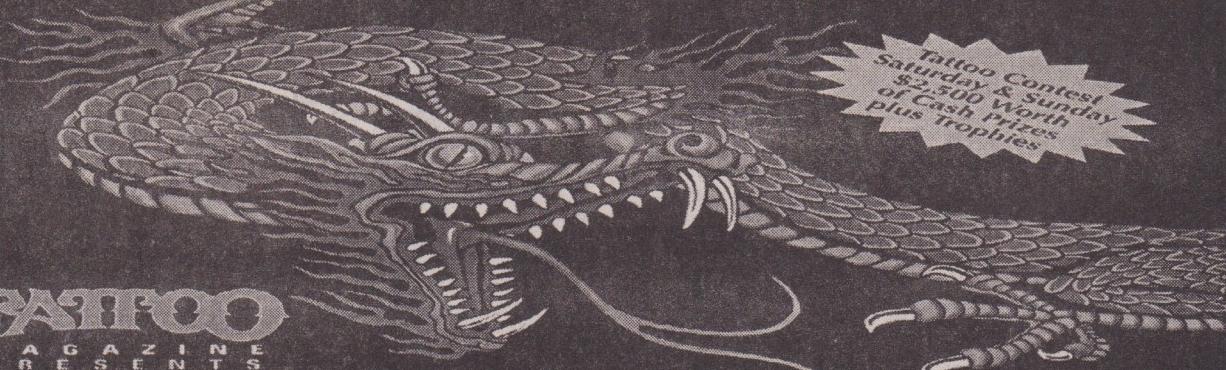
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where do they come up with this crap?

46 SHORT



JUST A LIABILITY
GO-KART RECORDS

So Circle Jerks are still influencing bands, eh? Crazy. That's certainly not a bad thing, seeing how every punk band that comes to the attention of kids these days have never heard a single note of theirs. Well, here's one band who has and is putting it to use. 46 Short is a fresh example of that great, simple, up-tempo excitement that will, hopefully never die. With 14 tracks of straight-ahead punk rock and a hidden track (#46 go figure!) of some classic punk rock puking n' flushing, it's good to know the kiddies out there now have something cool to refer to.

-Jasten King

69 CHARGER



TRASH DELUXE!
STARDUMB RECORDS

Coming out of the Netherlands, 69 Charger belts out their own brand of rock n' roll that is infectious and in your face. Astonishingly, the album makes you feel like you are at a show watching them play live. The energy is incredible, and it comes through with songs like "Girl" and "Stranded". This album makes me imagine sitting at a bar sipping on a beverage disenchanted, because the last band sucked and then hearing 69 Charger begin to play. Then, to your surprise your foot starts tapping even if their genre is not your favorite and then you proceed to have another drink, accompanied by rock n' roll.

-Jennifer Moncayo

100 DEMONS

100 DEMONS

DEATHWISH

Meet Connecticut's meanest musical offering since Hatebreed. I wouldn't bring it to a Cub Scout meeting or a sorority mixer, but the sound will be at its peak bouncing off grimy basement walls (where the true metalheads live, anyway). Maybe I yawned through the 40-second intro of water dripping on a faint six-string strum, but as the 43rd second struck, the guitars growled and exploded, with the double-bass thundering alongside like a snarling Doberman. Pete Morcey roars out through a sandpaper throat, "I'm outta time / You can't save me. This is Time Bomb", the first of nine songs that had me banging my head and pumping my left fist out the window as I looked for someone to grab and scream at. The album maintains ferocious intensity all the way through finale of "Never Surrender Virtue". Ah, heavy music lives.

-Thomas Murray

1349

BEYOND THE APOCALYPSE

CANDLELIGHT

1349 is a Norwegian black-metal clan whose sophomore aural attack bludgeons and brutalizes, ultimately scaring the crap out of you. Never mind the facepaint, the spiked wardrobe, and the overall demonic appearance, after just one listen of BEYOND THE APOCALYPSE, you'll think that evil really exists. These nine tracks are a true homage to the salad days of black metal, when riffs and drums pounded faster than hell, and lyrical subject matter praised the devil. Just check the goth-gone-wild pace of "Perished in Pain" or the ominous intensity of "Internal Winter" for proof that 1349's pulverizing program of black metal is truly the evil entity without being contrite or overwrought. Definitely worth a spin to those who dig Cradle of Filth, as well as those who need to reconvert to metal.

-Mike SOS

ALBERT REACT

CONFLUENCE & SCRAPES

EULOGY RECORDS

After a couple years, genres become popular and eventually cliché. Bands jumping on the bandwagon ultimately water it down, forcing everyone involved to search for something fresh. Pennsylvania's Albert React is aware of this fact, and despite being linked to Thursday and At the Drive-In by some critics, they manage to put an original spin on an exhausted genre. The chords will sound familiar, but all in all Albert React is surprisingly fresh, doing their best to avoid the death/fire imagery that has plagued music recently. Songs like "July's Memoir" blend throaty guitars and offbeat drumming with light screaming and elevated vocals to make a hell of an impact. Granted, Albert React has a slant similar to many bands currently sold at your neighborhood record store, yet it is the subtleties that are endearing, and they should not be overlooked.

-AC Lerok



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-Mike SOS

wannabe reviewer: Jack Partain



NEVER SAY: go Yankees!

WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN REVIEWING A CD: hearing a new band. Go Cubs.
THIS MONTH I WILL NOT: quit smoking.



ALL STATE CHAMPION

IS IT NOTHING TO YOU

FIVE ONE INC

All State Champion display all of the faculties of an 80s indie punk band, aptly shown on the outfit's latest, 10-track release. Tracks like "Regret" & "Bitter Taste" swirl around like Fugazi meeting At the Drive-In at a Thursday show, highlighting the band's deeply intriguing guitar work and intense screams from far away that lead up to fascinating musical crescendos. This Canadian quartet's seriousness shines through on songs like "Sinking Ship", using dissonant rhythmic rumblings to hammer its point home, while tracks like "Work Is Killing Me" display the band as an unbreakable unit, complete with a driving rhythm and group choral vocals. Emphatic and emotive, IS IT NOTHING TO YOU is bound to sweep you away from the mundane and into the tumultuous yet elegant musical landscape of All State Champion. www.fiveoneinc.com

-Mike SOS

ANTERRABAE

SHAKEDOWN TONIGHT

TRIPLE CROWN RECORDS

Anterrabae avoids the typical hardcore structure that has become stale, choosing to drive toward the chaotic, heavy writing style that endeared so many of us to Norma Jean and Every Time I Die. By no means am I drawing a parallel. Whether Anterrabae can measure up to expectations is left to be seen. However, with SHAKEDOWN TONIGHT they definitely put their best foot forward. Tracks like "Clever Shoplifting Tactics" really put foot to ass, combining the best parts of everything we have come to love about hardcore while still maintaining originality. The double-bass on

"Ready Set Explode" hits like a fucking truck, a throwback straight to The Black Dahlia Murders. Pick it up.

-AC Lerok



ARIEL KILL HIM

IN THE PYRAMID

EYEBALL

Ariel Kill Him isn't a band as much as it's a songwriter and producer working together as one entity. The project's members hail from Sweden, and the 10 tracks that comprise IN THE PYRAMID display the kind of European pop/rock sound on today's musical landscape. There are a lot of devices used during the recording that give off a larger-than-life vibe from Ariel Kill Him, from the electronic drum beats to the shimmering effects on the guitars and instruments. The songwriting and arrangements sound like an offshoot of Smashing Pumpkins meets Oneinedrawing, as the stark acoustic guitars collide with the technology of the studio quite a bit here, making interesting contrasts throughout the disc. If you like adventurous, very-produced music, then Ariel Kill Him should fit nicely in between your Coldplay and Jeff Buckley albums.

-Mike SOS

ASKELETON

ANGRY ALBUM -OR- PSYCHIC SONGS

GOODNIGHT RECORDS, INC.

Askeleton's ANGRY ALBUM -OR- PSYCHIC SONGS is a one-man show, Knol Tate, and is primarily created around keyboards, distorted vocals, and anything else Tate can do to slickly engineer his music. Tate also has a brother, Erin, whose percussion contributes to most of the human-meets-robot tracks, such as "The Future" and "Untitled No. 4". There are a lot of videogame sounds going back and forth, and the beats are often stiff. ANGRY ALBUM -OR- PSYCHIC SONGS is, however, spacey enough to enjoy. It just takes a little getting used to.

-Darren Ratner



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LADY MELODY

KUNG FU RECORDS

As Art Barrios's voice cracks and warps around his words, Audio Karate hits its stride on the line between hardcore and post-rock. The songs are as rage-feeding-catchy as "Trail of Dead" and "At the Drive-In" were, and the similarities are welcome even if the Fugazi adoration is a bit heavy-handed at times. Disjointed song structures and melody consciousness breeds some of the best songs of the band's career and a kick in the sack to a Warped Tour lineup, who'll have a bitch of a time keeping up.

-Rob Macy



AVOID ONE THING

CHOPSTICK BRIDGE

SIDEONEEDUMMY

Working the fundamentals seemed to be the theme for CHOPSTICK BRIDGE, but Next Stop Is the Last Stop is the apex into a better second half. Deeper structures and interesting riffs and bass lines provide for better songs to carry the deft lyrics of singer/bassist/Boston landmark Joe Gittleman. The blending of his vocals with guitarist Amy Griffin makes for some haunting, X-nodding moments. While the lyrics are not as inspired as earlier material (chiefly provided by Gittleman), signs of a cohesive unit and the willingness to take risks (see the country segue "The Airplane") find the band branching out further in the future.

-Rob Macy



AVSKUM

PUNKISTA

PUNKISTA is a rockin' fucking album. The brutality and purpose of political hardcore permeates their attack. Lead singer Gunnar is a hard throat singer, like Lemmy with an L.A. hardcore screech. The subject matter is the evils of war, economic power, terrorism, and racism. Hakan (ax), Jorgen (bass), and Pyri (drums) have a thick, on-fire attack. The group is brutal but stays totally in control, rockin' and riffing, tearing it up. My pick for track of the disc would be "State Terrorism". In their home, Sweden (some of the cuts are sung in Swedish), Avskum is a legendary outfit, raising a hard fist since their 1980 formation. PUNKISTA is a great CD. I can't rant enough. A+.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

BELOVED[U.S.]

THE RUNNING EP

SOLID STATE

Mmm, Beloved[U.S.], the North Carolinian outfit that defies all the limits of hardcore. Combining melody, singing, screaming, breakdowns, driving riffs, and various other elements, the band made an unavoidable impact on the hardcore scene with the release of its EP FAILURE ON. Now, its label Solid State is re-releasing the band's first EP, which was done completely DIY during the band's humble beginnings. Fans who can brag a longer-running devotion to the band will be completely familiar with some songs on THE RUNNING EP, including "Kiss It Goodbye", "The Blue Period", and "The Aftermath". These three songs were downloadable online for a long time, even when hard copies of the EP were hard to find. Now those three, as well as two other songs, are available for everybody to enjoy which they surely will. Don't be afraid: all the same winning elements to Beloved[U.S.]'s sound were there at the beginning, too. www.belovedrock.com

-iChow



BLACK DREAM

UNFORGIVING TIMES

ALL RIGHTS FUCKED

The production value for this album is atrocious. The vocals are too low. The drums are too tinny. During choruses, the guitars completely drown out the lead singer. A better production value would make this easy on the ears, either. The brand of rock Black Dream brings to the table is generic and bland. This is the kind of band who plays shows on the weekend for fun and who play the occasional fair. This is the kind of band that plays in a college dive bar where the patrons are more interested in socializing and getting drunk than the band on stage. Don't waste your time seeking out this release. It's boring and worth ignoring.

-Dane Jackson

music that rocks is better than great sex.



BLOOD AND TIME
AT THE FOOT OF THE GARDEN
NEUROT RECORDINGS

The new release from ex-Neurosis bandmates Scott Kelly and Noah Landis is slowly becoming the standard for all things deliberate and dull. From the opening notes, this album moves at a pace that a drugged snail would find lethargic. I thought I was listening to the soundtrack from BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY until the plodding bass kicked in. A guitar player with arthritis and a crippled hand could play the riffs on this disc. This might be considered rock by someone who exists on a diet of reds and Valium, but the rest of the world will sleep through these tracks. There is one song where this style works, as Kelly recites some dark poetry over slow, distorted synthesizers. It sounds like Thor meets CLASH OF THE TITANS, but much like The Moody Blues' pretentious poems, it works. All in all, a funeral dirge would be considered an upbeat ditty on this album.

-DUG



BLOODY & THE BASTARD CHILDREN
A TRIBUTE TO BLOODY F. MESS
BLACK & BLUE RECORDS

I have never heard of any of the bands on this collaboration album before I received it in the mail. Now I know who they all are, because I have been playing it non-stop in my car CD player. There are 25 songs on this disk, and you couldn't really ask for anymore. Well, maybe you could. It was that good. If you're a fan of old, fast punk, then this is definitely worth a few minutes (hours, really) to check out. A couple of the songs on the album were a little odd, but hey, I'm odd, and that's what I live for. If I wanted the mainstream shit, I would turn on MTV.

-Ian Wilkins



BLUE SKY MILE
SAND ONCE SEAS
INITIAL RECORDS

To Saves the Day: this is what your latest crap release should've sounded like complete with the depth of the lyrics, the charming riffs, and even Chris Conley's voice. Their lead singer, Jerry Kansky, IS Conley, but tuned down a couple notches and then some...which equals love. Hopefully for him, though, he won't get into puberty AS he's growing older and keep his voice that way. To Blue Sky Mile: your bio claims that you guys are providing a common ground between current faves like Thursday, Thrice and melodic hardcore classics. Fools! You guys are indie-POP and you should be damn proud of being the only ones who can pull it off so flawlessly.

-Mabel Lam



BLUE-EYED SON
WEST OF LINCOLN
EENIE MEENIE RECORDS

This album is very mellow and Weezer-like, with several accompanying instruments to create a multidimensional layer of calming sounds. The band exudes an acoustic appeal with some bubbly riffs that make you want to bounce your head from side to side like you are watching the Muppets. The album maintains a sense of tranquility, although it varies it with some upbeat songs. The album has a very surfer-bum feel (whatever that means).

-Jennifer Moncayo



BRIGHT EYES/NEVA DINOVA
ONE JUG OF WINE, TWO VESSELS
CRANK!

Say hello to the first truly split EP. Bright Eyes and Neva Dinova are two completely separate bands and will remain so, except for on this new EP from Crank! appropriately titled ONE JUG OF WINE, TWO VESSELS. The all-new songs were written both by Oberst and Bellows (frontmen from Bright Eyes and Neva Dinova, respectively). When it came to recording (which they did together in various house basements), they took turns doing guest vocals on each song, while the music was played by members of either band. While this is not only a true collaboration, it is a truly fantastic one. The songs feature elements of both bands, from the indie-rock orchestral tunes of Bright Eyes to the full and warm sound of Neva Dinova. www.crankthis.com

-iChow



BROKEN SPINDLES
FULFILLED/COMPLETE
SADDLE CREEK

Many of you indie-rock aficionados may recognize the name of Joel Petersen as the bassist for electro-dance machine The Faint. Broken Spindles is Petersen's solo project. Without even hearing the first note of the new album FULFILLED/COMPLETE, one can predict the synthesized brilliancy the album will contain just from an educated assumption based on the credibility of The Faint. With a complete listen to the 10-song release, it becomes clear that the same electronic genius present in any Faint release is definitely there. It also will open the listeners' eyes to a completely different use of electronics. Broken Spindles first came about as a soundtrack for a friend's video piece, and this origin is completely evident in the new album. The ambient tunes, the occasional haunting vocals, and the heavy use of piano all lend to a very art-film-like feel. www.saddle-creek.com

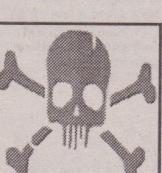
-iChow



BURN YOUR WISHES/THE AWARDS
SELF-TITLED SPLIT
MILK & COOKIE RECORDS

Two wrongs may not make a right, which can be extrapolated out to: two shitty bands don't make a good record. And that's the lesson learned from this split: Hard-rock, moody emo music may be taking over the world, but that doesn't mean I have to stand for it! Burn Your Wishes are from Boston, and The Awards are from Quebec City. I just don't understand the appeal of their pseudo-emotional power ballads. Do they want my sympathy? Do they want me to rock out? They will get neither! I have no sympathy for them, and I have no desire to move my feet so I have no use for them.

-chad



BUTANE
BUTANE
DEAF CHILD AREA RECORDS

Butane is all over the place. The songs will be funny/cute, and then the next song will be in your face ready to hook it up. Opening tune Scooter Club is a Cheap Trick rocker with lots of fun and get up and dance rock ability. Then, track 2, My Father, is a brutal tune about an asshole dad. I really dig the guitar work of Carmine; he knows a lot of guitar. Butane is a great rock band. A couple of the potential singles are New Kid, Sun on My Back, and Psycho Lunatic (which is a brick-to-the-forehead rocker). Butane wants to rock your world. Let 'em.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

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CADAVER
NECROSIS
CANDLELIGHT

Ah, yes, Cadaver, those death-metal maniacs from the icy lands of Norway. Back to their original moniker (Cadaver Inc. was the tag used for their 2001 *Eraache* disc) and the blast-beat grindcore insanity that made them legends, this band is once again determined to conquer eardrums and nations. While Cadaver Inc. wasted too much time with experimentation and industrialization, *NECROSIS* is back to straight-up death metal with a nice nod to Hellhammer and Venom (adding out-of-control mania to the mix, of course). It's hard to distinguish one song from the next, as the pace here is completely furious, but it works in a bludgeon-your-annoying-neighbor-repeatedly kinda way. *NECROSIS* is too sloppy to get serious about, and there's a fitting sense of frolic here (check out the cool death-metal nursery rhyme in *Evil Is Done*). For an unearthly power wank, check out this resurrected Cadaver.

-Jason Schreurs



CENTRAL CITY TRANSMISSION
INCOMMUNICADO
KAPOW RECORDS

Old-school rock n' roll is the first thing that comes to mind. *INCOMMUNICADO* is a refreshing blend of '60s guitar riffs and multiple genres, ranging from country to punk. This explosive rockabilly band demands notice and full attention, as the tracks break all confines by combining multiple genres and styles to form a unique blend of rock. Guitars barrel alongside the driving drums and melodic tones. There are times *Central City Transmission* even draws similarities in style from some of today's jam bands. Raspy male vocals are traded off and sometimes harmonized with the mesmerizing female singer. Singer Jacqueline Santillan's vocals are very similar to the new female psychobilly scene while the male vocals are intensely close to *Murder City Devils*. Classic country and rock n' roll guitars deepen the intricate sound as the intense mix of raspy and melodic vocals add to the eclectic mix of genres and sounds. *Central City Transmission* sticks with no confines and is dictated by no genre.

-Kevin Conway



CHINA WHITE
LIVE CHEAP CD
MALT SODA

The first of Malt Soda's *LIVE CHEAP CD* series (only five bucks!) showcases China White, the late-'70s hardcore punk band from Huntington Beach, featuring live cuts from numerous shows (including one from the Whiskey in '81) and then two reunion shows with original members vocalist Marc Martin, bassist James Rodriguez, guitarist Frank Ruffino, and drummer Joey Ruffino from '02 and '03. And what's cool is that the reunion shows sound just as raw and infused with youthful vigor as the set taped in '81. Also included are some early demos and videos. Some of the standout tracks are *Live in Your Eyes*, *DangerZone*, *Solid State*, and the urgent, chaotic instrumental *Anthem*. Word is they're recording a new album due out this summer. -Janelle Jones



CHRISTOPHER R. COELLO
YOU I AM YOU
STICKFIGURE RECORDS

Sounding like early-'90s *Rephlex* or modern-day *Planet-Mu*, breakbeat specialist Christopher R. Coello concocts a coldly calculated world of skit breaks and tinny beats throughout *YOU I AM YOU*. While he occasionally summons glacial-patrons Boards of Canada and *Plone*, Coello's got an ear tuned to melody, and while it's not always the most engaging listen, he's crafted *YOU I AM YOU* with enough twinkling melancholy to beautify even the darkest of nights.

-Jason Jett



CLASSIC CASE
IT'S BEEN BUSINESS DOING PLEASURE WITH YOU
SELF-RELEASED

The debut EP from this New York-based quartet is (as Bono would say) fucking brilliant. With former members of *Glassjaw*, *Blankface*, and *Sound of Speed*, it's obvious these guys have honed their musical chops to a sleek, razor-thin edge. With tight lyrical harmonies, blistering guitar, and unique songwriting that spans the alt-rock genre, this band definitely has what it takes to become the biggest thing to hit CBGB since The Talking Heads. There are far too many bands on the market today that sound alike and couldn't write a creative tune to save a life, but *Classic Case* is the real deal, with rock that reaches for the stars and pulls down a couple of galaxies. The six songs on the advance EP copy I received actually have one extra tune, *Buildings*, which is not on the five-song EP available from the band's Website. Check out this terrific band at . -DUG

-DUG



COLONIAL EXCESS
LIFE AT THE BOTTOM RUNG
CEREBRAL STUDIO

The surrealistic cover art of *LIFE AT THE BOTTOM RUNG* would lead you to believe there's some crazy, possibly Elephant 6-inspired madness housed within its walls...but boy, would you be wrong. Rather than mow you down with celestial waves of *psychedelica*, Colonial Excess bore you to tears with repetitive, sample-based works that plod out halfway through their paltry run times. It's not a complete loss, however: the jazztronic *Branding Iron* is mildly amusing, a genteel amalgam of Miles Davis cool and boho revivalism.

-Jason Jett



COREY LANDIS
FEAST OF SCRAPS
URBAN MYTH RECORDINGS

Born on the day Elvis Presley died, Los Angeles-based singer/songwriter Corey Landis joins the ranks of great troubadours like Warren Zevon and Tom Waits with his debut solo full-length. All 11 songs were recorded at home, mastered by Landis, and picked up by the Canadian indie label Urban Myth Recordings. The accompaniment consists of keyboards, the occasional guitar, and once in a while some overwrought percussion. The real instrument is Landis's voice, as he belts out semi-comic lyrics that would be poetry if they didn't rhyme. Well, maybe the hidden track, the *I Will Fuck You* song, wasn't very poetic, but great songwriters are few and far between. The only real drawbacks to this disc are Landis's own overproduction of some of the songs and a few of the scratchy background noises. Like troubadours of old, his dark, ironic lyrics work best against a minimalist background of the lone piano or a single acoustic guitar. This is an artist who can dominate any small venue and who should be recording gems like this in a much better studio than his living room.

-DUG



CRIONICS
HUMAN ERROR
CANDLELIGHT

As I was listening to *HUMAN ERROR*, I got a great feeling because I heard traces of *Dimmu Borgir*'s old days within the mix of speed picking and blast beats. One of a surprising number of great metal bands to come out of Poland lately, it appears Crionics is wasting no time with the usual metal songwriting techniques and is instead combining the wonderful synthesizer work of *Waclaw Borowiec* with the interesting guitar play of Michal Skotnicki into a band great for fans of *Yattering* and *Behemoth*.

-Zac

I'm so tired of the generic shite out lately.



DESCENDENTS
COOL TO BE YOU
FAT WRECK CHORDS

Descendents are like a fine wine or piece of cheese, because they only get better with age. Unlike most bands who start to gradually suck, with COOL TO BE YOU, Descendents release an album that is just as good or even better than any of the band's other releases. The songwriting is a bit more mature now, dealing with issues like death and politics plus, the toilet humor and songs about love that any Descendents fan has grown to appreciate also make an appearance. This may be a bit premature, but I have no problem calling COOL TO BE YOU one of the best five albums of the year. These guys have been around so long for a reason. Pick this disc up and listen to them school some of the younger kids in the scene.

-Dane Jackson



DESOOTO REDS
HANGLIDE THRU YER WINDOW
FLOATING MAN RECORDS

Welcome to the wacko world of Desoto Reds. HANGLIDE THRU YER WINDOW truly epitomizes the word alternative, carrying on such circuitous tunes such as Hot Air Balloon, Allowed Loud, and Howells and Jowells. This isn't much of change since the group's PREPPY FREAKOUT VOL. 1 and VOL. 2. With so many crazy synths and sways, twists and twangs and clashes and clangs going through it, it's surprising Ringling Brothers doesn't pick this up. HANGLIDE THRU YER WINDOW is not a bad album, just interesting.

-Darren Ratner



DIRTSHAKES
RETURN TO BOOMSFELDELIAH!
VALUE RECORDS

This album is a CD anthology of their previous vinyl recordings. It also includes eight videos for your computer. The videos are pretty cool. They're like German stock footage from the 60s of like, go-go girls dancing in front of machines. There's also some live footage of the band. Dirtsakes are from Germany and have played shows with The Supersuckers and Groovie Ghoulies. Dirtsakes are really good. They remind me of The Ramones and Mudhoney, more or less. They cover The Angry Samoans. They just seem to really understand rock n roll, and they bash it out, and they're great. Black and White is a really good song. I recommend checking them out.

-chad



DISMEMBER
WHERE THE IRONCROSSES GROW
CANDLELIGHT

Well, as far as far as true and pure Scandinavian death-march metal goes, this is pretty much the culmination of it right here. Dismember has been around since 1988, and they have constantly proven themselves as the metal veterans that they are. Truthfully, there isn't a whole lot to say about the album. If you own any other Dismember albums, you'll know they're not breaking any new ground but it doesn't matter, because it's the sound that fans have grown to love. So if you're in the mood for heavy, crunching guitars, tough vocals, and insane drumming, pick up WHERE

-Zac

THE IRONCROSSES GROW.

ENSOPIH
OPUS DEMENTIAE ET IN DENIGMATE
CRUZ DEL SUR

Ensohp is weird. To begin with, they wear dresses and gas masks. Second, they're from Italy a country practically devoid of creative production over the last 50 years. And they have a flautist. And they play gloomy avant-gardism (or so says their Website). OPUS DEMENTIAE is their first international release. Don't be fooled: it's not groundbreaking. A dark hodgepodge of cheesy industrial schmaltz, electronic annoyances, and some not-so-heavy heavy metal with a vocalist that sounds more like Tom Jones than Glen Benton of Deicide. OPUS leaves the listener feeling like Cradle of Filth might actually be the great band they claim to be. It's the kind of synth-laden bullshit that Europe's been shitting out for years now, and I'm sick of it. Recommended for masochists looking for a good night alone or fans of the new Amorphis crap.

-jacak



EVERGREEN TERRACE
WRITERS BLOCK
EULOGY RECORDS

Cool idea, awful execution. This is a cover album of mainstream stuff from the 80s and 90s. I like the idea that they are covering stuff they probably actually listened to 10 years ago and not playing the punker-than-thou, how-obscure-can-we-get game, but that's about the only positive point. Evergreen Terrace's growl/scream is maintained, which does not work with the songs they've chosen to cover; it only serves to completely throw off the timing of the songs. Thankfully, in the background there is a supporting vocalist singing, which allows the songs to be recognizable. Not only does the pop filtered through hardcore not work, but the butchering of the songs also extinguishes any heart in the original material, especially with Sunday Bloody Sunday. The last song is an original and the only track that doesn't emanate cross-genre discomfort.

-Erika Owens



EXODUS
TEMPO OF THE DAMNED
NUCLEAR BLAST

The band that taught you the Toxic Waltz and gave us the most inspirational version of Low Rider since Cheech and Chong have returned on the scene undoubtedly, skeptics will say, to cash in on the current wave of the revival of metal. Yes, we're speaking of the Bay Area thrash unit known as Exodus. Yet, if you think the band is just calling this album in for the sake of a reprise, think again. The quintet's latest, 10-track studio offering (the band's first in 12 years) is a scalding surprise, as tracks like War Is My Sheppard and the twin guitar assault of the title cut are indicative that these forefathers of the extreme haven't lost a step when it comes to writing thrash metal anthems with balls and bite. Tracks like the riff-a-licious Culling the Herd and the churning Sealed with a Fist as proof that these guys have not only still got it, but they've raised the bar when it comes to producing breakneck thrash metal. TEMPO OF THE DAMNED displays a band that has retained metal's crisp crunch and aren't afraid to unleash the relentless assault on the metal masses.

-Mike SOS



EXTERNAL MENACE
THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION
DOCTOR STRANGE

Raw, blistering sounds from Scotland attacking and bringing the rise of old-school punk back on the map! External Menace will grab you by your throat and insert their guitar chord directly in your ear, letting the sounds off of THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION permeate your dilapidated brain. This 1998 re-release is a necessary addition to punk-rock junkies! Although the track titles are somewhat typical and lacking originality (e.g., This Country, Don't Conform, and Society), each song stands on its own in creating a brilliant interaction with old-school punk (think early GBH, DOA, and The Ruts) and new-school motives. Listening to this CD reminds me of how much I love true, raw street punk, rather than that screaming montage that has flooded the scene. Bust out your 80s studded jacket and grab some paint. Add External Menace to your collage of punk greats.

-Courtney Riot

www.skratchmagazine.com

FEELING LEFT OUT
ONCE UPON A TIME
LLR RECORDINGS

Northern New Jersey's Feeling Left Out have a good thing going with ONCE UPON A TIME. It looks as if this duo takes some random Pink Floyd experimentalism (which is quite clear from the opening intro's ticking clock and radio static) and blends it in nicely with emo acoustics. The album has a solemn feel to it, but it remains fevered in its emotional delivery and overall arrangement. ONCE UPON A TIME makes Feeling Left Out a two-some worthy of some spotlight. Hell, the album drew me in from the get-go.

-Darren Ratner

FINAL WORD
FOOLS LIKE YOU
INDECISION RECORDS

I'm not going to mince words here: this record sucks. Each track sounds identical to the one before it. The lyrics are chanted, which is just annoying instead of delivering the effect the band is looking for. There is no subtlety. There is no talent. I am glad it was only five songs, because if it were any longer I would have cut my headphone cord straight in half. I can't even make a joke out of it it just blows.

-AC Lerok

FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC
S/T
REPTILIAN RECORDS

It's hard for me to really define this six-song EP as music; it's more like noise and distortion. This group from Baltimore tries unsuccessfully to come off as a crusty throwback hardcore/punk band. Instead, Flowers in the Attic leaves the listener confused and wanting more. The guitar work is monotonous and droning. The singing (by vocalist Rebecca Burchette) is more like a weak attempt to sound as tough and as hard as possible. The way the vocals sound on this EP, it almost sounds like Rebecca is going through agonizing pain. Whatever. Regardless of my personal feelings, Flowers in the Attic claim to be an authentic throwback to early punk bands like Born Against and Spitboy. So, if you like that stuff, you might like them. I, on the other hand, don't.

-Dane Jackson

FOR STARS
I T FALLS APART
FUTURE FARMER RECORDINGS

This is a pleasant, sweet, and low CD of atmospheric indie pop with vocals so restrained that they're nearly whispered. It is a dark and mysterious journey wrought with emotion etched out in the stark lines of sparse arrangements. Somewhere, out there in a land of lonely nights, this album is right now burning itself into the soul of someone tortured and alone.

-Tom Tearaway Schulte

FRANKLIN FOR SHORT
IN THE DARK
STEREO TYKE RECORDS

This trio has a great sound that fuses electric guitars and drums with an acoustic guitar to create a pseudo folk/indie rock hybrid. Not only are the songs on IN THE DARK arranged with precision, but they're also extremely poppy and catchy. Plus, unlike most albums that have one or two great songs and filler, IN THE DARK is filled with one infectious tune after the other. My only complaint is that, at times, the drums become hard to hear. Other than that, Franklin for Short's IN THE DARK is flawless. This is for fans of both acoustic music, as well as for fans of music acts like Ben Kweller, Modest Mouse, and Frank Allison and the Odd Sox.

-Dane Jackson

FUCKED UP
EPICS IN MINUTES
DERANGED

>From the opening chords of Color Removal, you can feel the punk rock ooze from the pores of the five humans which comprise Toronto's Fucked Up. Straying from the mall-punk motifs and instead getting real, ugly, and really ugly, EPICS IN MINUTES isn't for the kids who get their hair colored at Supercuts and wait with bated breath for the next Offspring record. Fucked Up is for the angry, desolate, and mistreated youth who need to vent all of the frustrations of having your eyes wide open for the very first time. This 21-track collection chronicles the outfit's brief yet potent career and includes demos and a live radio gig that shows the band's bravery in sharing an unfortunate outing. If you enjoy smash-mouth punk rock like Zeke and The Bronx, you'll find Fucked Up interesting enough to warrant a few listens.

-Mike SOS

GIVE UP THE GHOST
YEAR ONE
BRIDGE 9

Give Up the Ghost is one of the East Coast's brightest hardcore bands today, and as we look back on the outfit's career thanks to the 16-track retrospective YEAR ONE we see how this crew developed. Included in this collection are GUTG's two out-of-press EPs, plus a kick-ass cover of MC5's garage-rock classic Kick Out the Jams. If that's not enough seething hardcore for you, then check out the exclusive three-track live offering taken from the BBC (that's in England, people). YEAR ONE is a must for fans who have just latched onto the infectious venom Give Up the Ghost spew forth. And if you adhere to the old-school hardcore mentality, this release is a must-have. www.bridge9.com

-Mike SOS

GRAVY
FOURTEEN
ROCKWOOD

Gravy's bouncy rock delivery smacks you in the face with cleverness from the opening lines of Girlfriend, where the lyric proclaims that the band got a drummer, but he wants to sing. From there, this NYC quartet's straight-ahead, pull-no-punches brand of rock stays the course by laying down the perfect amount of riffs and heartfelt emotions to knock a few beers back and shoot some pool to. Tracks like the garage rock flare of Anatomy and the sad and lonesome feel of Hollow Place run the gamut of what goes down at the local watering hole on any given Friday night, speaking out to Gen Xers in Anywhere, U.S.A. Gravy also display the kind of solid spirit found in the bands like Cheap Trick and Soul Asylum, and even though this outfit can easily be lumped in with tepid acts like Three Doors Down and Matchbox Twenty by possessing similar rock posturing, the hard rocking zeal found on tracks like New Home and Find It is unmatched by the band's peers, giving Gravy the edge over the usual leftovers.

-Mike SOS

music that rocks is better than great sex.



GRUBSTAKE GHOSTS OF ARKADELPHIA NINE MILE RECORDS

Encompassing the quirker and lo-fi moments of Pavement and Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Grubstake lay down some very interesting songs on their sophomore release *GHOSTS OF ARKADELPHIA*. Grubstake's sound is a unique perversion of the blues that is commendable and validated through their grass-roots approach and gritty, dirty lo-fi sound. Most of the songs are fuzzed-out dirges that sometimes take on a hypnotic quality and occasionally employ electric instruments, such as accordions, tape loops, and pianolas. The few rocking moments on the record (like *Ballad of Sharon de Payne*) tend to hop like a good Blues Explosion freak out without Jon Spencer's over-the-top wailing. The only dull moment here is the carnival fun of *Circus Song*.

-Wally P



HALIFAX A WRITERS REFERENCE NO MILK RECORDS

The first track on this CD, *Sydney*, documents the loss one feels when a loved one dies, but from the combination of melodic chords with basic one-two punk drum beats, you wouldn't guess that a eulogy lies beneath the trendy pop-punk beats. Sounding similar to Finch or Rufio, Halifax takes emotional lyrics and a listener-friendly harmony to produce a promising CD. The only catch is that their sound is incredibly trendy right now, like trucker-hat trendy. In keeping with the traditions of trendy emo out there, I bobbed my head to the beats and even sang along with the *hey* choruses, proving that yes, this is a catchy and altogether good CD...but hopefully next time we hear from Halifax, they will have let their talent grow past the trend and perhaps into a CD we don't have to hide (behind the Blink 182, of course).

-Carley Charpentier



HARKONEN DANCING INITIAL RECORDS

Sharply punctuated by chaotic wails, Harkonen's latest EP, *DANCING*, gives you a small dosage of their grungy talent. They display a talent to churn out repetitive beats all too frequently. Really, if they had a video featuring hot booty-dancers shakin' it so fast that you forget how boring their music is, why, they could easily rise to the status of J Kwon's *Tippsy*. To give them some credit, though, the monotony is briefly interrupted by *I'm Taking the Hydroplane to Bellingham*, a serene interlude that will make you hella kurr about them.

-Mabel Lam



HASTE THE DAY BURNING BRIDGES SOLID STATE

BURNING BRIDGES is your textbook metalcore album but this is not a bad thing. We have heard it all before. So what? This quintet from Indianapolis has created an album stuffed full of flawless duel guitars, catchy sing-alongs, and well-placed breakdowns. *Haste the Day* comes off as if they aren't trying too hard to fit any particular genre. The tracks *American Love* and *Breaking My Own Heart* are particularly effective, in the sense that they feel sincere, not just more carbon-copy metalcore love hear we hear so much these days. The only problem I had with this

-Darren Davis

album is the fact that it might be a little too heavy for those who want it melodic and too melodic for those who like to keep it heavy. But if you are looking for something in the middle, *BURNING BRIDGES* is a good place to start.

-Darren Davis



HELLOGOODBYE EP DRIVE-THRU

So much, but so little to say about this five-song EP from Huntington Beach natives HelloGoodbye. Having recently been signed to the ridiculously successful pop-punk label Drive-Thru Records, anybody can make well-founded assumptions as to what HG will sound like. They actually might surprise you a bit, though. There are definitely the same poppy, addictively catchy, and appealing melodies present, but this time they are achieved mostly through synthetic or electronic mediums. With beats entirely comprised synthetically, sounds completely foreign to the organic realm, and a voice that sounds almost unearthly it is so ethereal, one may wonder how the band performs live! But they pull it off. All of Drive-Thru's bands seem to blow up (and they most certainly go pop), but it's arguable, especially in HelloGoodbye's case, that this attainable success is well-deserved. www.hellogoodbye.net

-tChow



wannabe reviewer: Jennifer Moncayo

NEVER SAY: never?

WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN REVIEWING A CD: Good songs.

THIS MONTH I WILL NOT: be lazy.



HERE KITTY KITTY THIS IS BROKEN LORELEI

Here Kitty Kitty is a punk-rock trio comprised of two chicks and one dude whose 11-track release scolds the audience with female angst and punk-rock brevity. Sound like The Donnas after they got dumped, HKK use its three-chord stomp wisely, spewing venomous diatribes over minimalist riffs that illicit bouncing and group choral shouts. Showcasing no shortage of hooks, tracks like the straightforward march of *Unfriend* and the apathetic celebration of *Birthday* manage to stick in your head long after the riffs whiz on by, while the fitting cover of The Runaways *Do You Wanna*

-Mike SOS



HIERONYMUS BOSCH HAVIN FUN, SOUNDIN GOOD SELF-RELEASED

These three guys from Brooklyn offer up some garage rock with undertones of surf rock with *Havin Fun, Soundin Good*. I'm not sure how much fun the band is actually having, but after listening to this eight-track opus of surf rock, you will be. This album is catchy, very poppy, and easy to listen to. I could see a song like *Borg Warner, Four-on-the-Floor* find its way onto a Quentin Tarantino movie soundtrack. If you're afraid this album will only be filled with surf-rock goodness, then check out *The Movie Director*. That track adds elements of Blur, The Doors, and garage rock. If you're intrigued with this band, you can listen to their entire album for free at cdbabyc.com.

-Dane Jackson



HILLSIDE VILLAGE CLICH FOR THE AGES STAY AT HOME RECORDS

I can't for the life of me figure out why this band decided it would be a good idea to start off this CD by desecrating The Cure's *Lovesong*. I give them points for rearranging it into a punk song; but still, there are certain songs you just don't fuck with. Hillside Village are a quartet out of East L.A. that kick out some competent punk tunes mixed with some metal guitar licks. Hillside Village show a bit of a melodic side on tracks like *Causes & Effects* and the title track. Otherwise, this is pretty up-tempo stuff. See hillsidevillage.cjb.net.

-Jude Ruiz



HOLDEN'S CATCH HOLDEN'S CATCH GET AROUND

Holden's Catch is a Chicago-based quartet whose musical leanings fall somewhere in the Avail/Hot Water Music/Samiam category, where the music is a distinct blend of subtle yet furious punk rock; and the band's chops have just in much in common with Husker Du as they do Social Distortion. While the melancholic mixture of songs like *Efficient Fixation* have got a semi-British rock stomp on them, the overall feel of the six-track release is likened to a pot full of water just about to boil over from being on the stove too long. Holden's Catch may take a while to warm up, but once a few tracks seep in your system, you'll feel the dreamy anguish that songs like *Sudden Destruction* delivers firsthand.

-Mike SOS



HOPE AND SUICIDE/EMMANUEL 7 SPLIT CD PROTOCOL 1

The first five songs of this CD belong to Hope and Suicide, a quartet featuring current members of Bloodlet. If Botch and Hopesfall were to have a love child, Hope and Suicide would be it. Tracks like *Minimum Wage Playboy* exemplify some strangely catchy guitars and decent vocals. I was definitely surprised by their final track, *Life in the Dirt Rock City*, for it dabbled rather unexpectedly in somewhat of a 90s-rock sound. The first thing I noticed about *Emmanuel 7* was that they were much more energetic than the previous band. The songs were a blur of Converge-like

ing and questionable melodic vocals. Nothing stood out about *E7*. The tracks sounded the same from one to the next, except for maybe *Folsom Prison Blues*, a Johnny Cash cover, which actually worked. If you are into melody, mathcore, or mayhem, fork out 10 bucks for this album.

-Darren Davis



HUMBLE GODS BORN FREE SUBURBAN NOIZE

Humble Gods, like most infamous punk bands, have been through its share of hard times, but the recent barrage of death and controversy seemed to have marred the momentum of this long-running LA punk outfit. The band may be deterred by these setbacks, but they remain undaunted, shown via the release of *BORN FREE*, a 17-track indication that Humble Gods are ready to deal with the unfairly dealt hand the best way possible; musically. Ripping through anemic numbers that serve as inspiration for the downtrodden and underappreciated while embodying the spirit of the unsanitized punk bands of the 80s mixed with the radio friendly stroke of songs like *Fools Paradise* and *Rescue Me*, Humble Gods have found solace by turning to creative forces to exorcise its demons, and in turn, have made a punk record with a sense of purpose.

-Mike SOS



IN DUE TIME BACK TO BASICS STRIKE FIRST

I'm not sure of your tolerance level on moshy hardcore, but mine's pretty fucking low sometimes. It's funny, though, because it totally depends on your mood at the time. I listened to *In Due Time's* *BACK TO BASICS* this morning and thought, *What a waste of perfectly good male hormones this is!* But then I slap this puppy on after a hard day of life struggles, and it's really speaking to my suppressed testosterone. This shit makes me want to grow some muscles and get sweaty. Find me a workout bench and some steroids, because I'm primed and ready. The lyrics are incredibly cliché and done one gazillion times before, but they're perfect listening for my new exercise/kickboxing regimen. Bands like *In Due Time* really make me wish I was a tough guy without a care in the world kicking sand into some scrawny guy's face. *BACK TO BASICS*, motherfucker! Respect, compromise, domination, dishonor, and God it's all here.

-Jason Schreurs



INSOMNIUM SINCE THE DAY IT ALL CAME DOWN CANDLELIGHT

As if there weren't already enough amazing bands to come from Finland, add Insomniac to the list. This melodic death-metal band has somehow written a purely original and wildly entertaining album without jumping from the death and progressive metal genre. The riffs are wildly melodic, and guitarist Ville Friman demonstrates a masterful control of song structure and an unbelievable gift for riffs that bring me back to the glory days of *In Flames* and there's more depth to this band. I simply cannot praise this album enough. Metalheads everywhere will eat this one up, so don't miss out.

-Zac



INSTED PROUD YOUTH 1986-1991 INDECISION RECORDS

Another record for the hardcore completist, *PROUD YOUTH* features 44 songs from this defunct group of Orange County natives. In their prime in the late 80s, Insted was one of the most prominent positive-message straight-edge bands. This collection of two full-lengths, an EP, their original demo, and five previously unreleased tracks shows that among classic hardcore acts, the band is still valid, if not highly valued.

-Casey Clague

you look like a dumbass with headphones on.

INVALID MONSTERS UNDER THE BED DEMO

When reviewing CDs, I try not to be superficial about things like laser-printer-generated business cards, CD-R demos with select songs from an upcoming release and 30-second song clips, demo surveys, bios that read like junior-high-school biographies on Theodore Roosevelt, street teams, and Geocities Websites. However, all of these half-assed, pathetic attempts at promoting the band and acting professional are excellent metaphors for the music. Cheap, lame, and trite. The same old suburban pop-punk band with a bad name and even worse logo writing homogenized songs with cliché lyrics, and guitar solos that sound like lessons from a Mel Bay book. COME ON! Punk rock is not about going through the motions and trying to make all the right moves, it's about pissing off your parents, rejecting conventional thinking, flipping the bird to pop culture, and fucking having fun!

-Wally P.



JENOAH MORNING IS WHEN JENOAH WAKES UP DRIVE-THRU

I'm really confused, but I really like it! The first track off of youthful four-piece Jenoah's new Drive-Thru release begins like an At the Drive-In song. As the song progresses, 80s catchy pop melodies, short-lived screams, and 60s twanging guitars are all introduced. My first impression: What is this? It gets even better with each song. Some hearty rock n roll riffs are utilized, poppy harmonies are ever present, but always there is an inventive design. You would think that a new Drive-Thru artist would equal all the well-known ingredients for the next big thing, but no: Jenoah proves that Drive-Thru is just really good at picking out winning artists. There are so many uniquely eclectic and definitely singular elements present in Jenoah's sound that it would be impossible to categorize this band into any other title than really good. Find out for yourself at www.drivethrurecords.com.

-tChow

JOHNNY ACTION FIGURE SELF-TITLED 19 NORTH RECORDS

I instantly take a dislike to their main vocalist Brendan Fullman, who has that nasal, whiny, Jordan of New Found Glory tone. As I review CDs, I often jot down words that strike me in the head (like their bouncy beats). The one phrase I got from the track "Victory" was "everybody go pogo time." Pogo to the gut-wrenching, calling guitar riffs and the answering vocals. This is truly one of the CDs you review where you pray you'll barely make the word-count minimum, since, well, suck is just about all you can say.

-Mabel Lam



JUANITA MOLINA TRES COSAS DOMINGO

There's no good way to argue that Argentina-by-way-of-Los Angeles singer/sound architect Juanita Molina isn't doing something right. In fact, she's doing just about everything right. Molina, who keeps a roof over her head engineering free-flowing and empyrean sound capsules, has turned a substantial number of industry heads with her subdued and celestial aural arrangements. 2003's SEGUUNDO received the praise of ROLLING STONE and THE NEW YORK TIMES, and it was named by ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY as the best world-music album of 2003. And now, just when Molina thought things couldn't possibly get better, her latest collection of atmospheric and electric shoegaze is receiving a standing ovation from SKRATCH. (It's all downhill from here, Juanita.) Although comparisons to Sigur Rós are inevitable, they're not entirely accurate. As TRES COSAS wafts high above the clouds, it transcends genre not to mention worldly critique and comparison.

-Dave Kargol



KETTLE CADAVER A TASTE OF BLOOD DVD HORROR ROCK RECORDS

Well, I can honestly say that this was the most disturbing and horrifying thing I've ever watched. If you get your kicks by watching a guy put fishhooks through his mouth, staple himself, nail his penis to a piece of wood, cut himself open, fight his audience, commit bestiality with a dead coyote, tear a house apart, and show you around his private estate (complete with 10-foot chainsaws), then this DVD is exactly what your collection has been missing. I'm not sure as to how exactly this man was able to do all these things or how he was even inspired to come up with the ideas for it but regardless, I believe you should buy this just so you can say you've seen it (if not for anything else). I now lead a different life.

-Zac



KHOLD MORKE GRAVERS KAMMER CANDLELIGHT

How hardcore is Khold? So hardcore that this Norwegian black-metal troupe don't even bother to translate its doom-laden lyrics into English. And let's not forget the Godflesh-meets-Bathory musical stance the band takes, a style that may sound a tad disjointed at first, yet really accentuates the bleak, cold feelings the band embodies. Evil, foreboding, and surprisingly mid-tempo (a device which ultimately gives Khold its edge), it's the after-effects of the driving, Dod or the bone-chilling atmosphere the title track lays down that will frighten the listener more than anything else.

www.candlelightrecords.co.uk

-Mike SOS



KILLER DREAMER SELF-TITLED KAPOW

What an oddity this band is, sort of like a mix between horror punk (AFI, Nerve Agents, Pitch Black, etc.) and late-80s crossover not always with the best of results. Moments of Accused-like glory rear their pug-ugly heads sporadically in these 14 songs, leaving me tickled and giddy.. but they are too few and far between. When this band stays weird and incomparable, the listening is good. When Killer Dreamer delves into boring, three-chord punk sloopie, well, the listening ain't quite as good. Still, as noise-fests like Gorgomoth hit the ground running complete with Blaine Cook (by way of Brian Johnson) shrieks and snarls it's pure, raunchy bliss.

-Jason Schreurs



KILOWATTHOURS & THE RUM DIARY SPLIT SPANGMAN RECORDS

This is a shoe-gazing indie-rock East-meets-West split CD that features four tracks from Brooklyn's Kilowatthours, four tracks from Colati's (a small town outside S.F.) The Rum Diary, and one track with both bands. Both of these bands create some spaced-out rock tunes that might appeal to fans of My Bloody Valentine, Three Mile Pilot, or Mogwai. The Rum Diary's best moments come on pulsating (this group performs with two drummers) tracks like The Electroencephalograph and Memory Controls. Kilowatthours get in touch with moody, melodic side on tracks like Poolside and Letting Go. This is a lovely waste of time from two gifted up-and-coming bands. You can stream the album at kilowatthours.com/

-Jude Ruiz

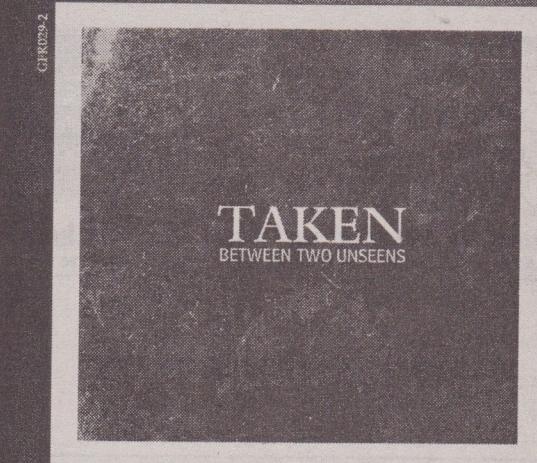
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KYLESIA
NO ENDING EP
PRANK RECORDS

I truthfully have absolutely no idea where this band was going with these four songs. Each track would almost sound as if it was about to go somewhere, and then it would turn around again and turn into something completely different. I did not enjoy the contrast of the high screams vs. the low gutterpunk-type screams, nor the very basic guitar work. I can't really compare them to any other band, because I simply have not heard another band quite like them. My only advice to you would be that if you're into somewhat experimental music with an influence based on metal, you might want to check these guys out.

-Zac



LANGHORNE SLIM
THE ELECTRIC LOVE LETTER
NARNACK RECORDS

Inevitably, Langhorne Slim's brand of offbeat, Brooklyn anti-folk will receive only positive press from critics too quick to toss him into the discount bin of musical genius which really means that he's too weird for most to understand. However, the best criticism I've yet to hear regarding Slim's debut, THE ELECTRIC LOVE LETTER, comes from a friend who listens to Incubus: This guy needs singing lessons. But more to the point, Slim's urban hootenanny sounds like it comes from the vaults of Elephant 6. He mixes portions of bluesy bluegrass, neo-hippie psychedelia, and a snotty punk spirit to create music charmingly reminiscent of Skip Spence's long-lost underground classic OAR without being overtly derivative. If he can lose the eccentric genius pretensions, one gets the impression that Slim has at least one great song coming, if not a great album.

-jcak



LE CONCORDE
CONCORDE
SPADE KITTY RECORDS

Singer/songwriter Stephen Becker reveals his talent for crafting smooth pop songs on CONCORDE. Becker and his band expand on the sound of their many 80s pop influences, including Prefab Sprout, Psychedelic Furs, and The Dream Academy. The inclusion of piano, harmonica, and saxophone sections develop a new dimension for several songs, keeping the listener attentive. Many indie-rock acts today have an abundance of straightforward pop melodies but a scarcity of complementing musicianship and multifaceted structure. Lush tracks like People Moves and

Parallel Lives show you that Le Concorde are one of the bands that don't fall into that category. Getting toward the end of the disc, I notice a purity and innocence that subtly resonates through virtually every song. It's just a pleasant, reflective sound that leaves you with an optimistic feeling.

-Anthony



LE SCRRAWL
EAGER TO PLEASE
LIFE IS ABUSE RECORDS

Germany's Le Scrawl shell out some interesting freak-out grind and manage to put their own unique stamp on it by fusing ska and jazz choruses, even throwing in a little metal. Le Scrawl even throw in demented covers of some De La Soul, Terrorizer, Chic, and The Exploited (although you may not notice immediately, as the songs have had some extensive reworking). Perhaps you're raising a brow trying to figure how they pull this off and pull this off well, mind you. Well, that's something you just need to hear for yourself. Check lifeisabuse.com for mp3s.

-Jude Ruiz



LESS
COVER, PROTECTIVE, INDIVIDUAL
FCC

Dark acoustic guitars fill each track of the second album from Less, COVER, PROTECTIVE, INDIVIDUAL. The sorrowful acoustic guitars that are very similar to that found in much of Latin music are accompanied with soft yet wounded vocals. Poetic and unsettling lyrics can be found in several tracks, as is seen in Motionless: I recognize these scars from bedsores, not from whips / From lying, not suffering at all / The wind blows and it uproots the trees / Bodies blow like glitter in a breeze / You can dance or you can try to hide / But I know which way I'd rather die. Now, you probably won't be popping this album into your stereo while laying out at the beach discussing fashion tips, or probably not even when you are pumping iron at the gym while pondering what's for dinner but that's okay. This album is rich, mysterious, and sobering, much how life can be at times.

-Anthony



LES SAVY FAV
INCHES
FRENCH KISS RECORDS

Les Savy Fav is my FAVORITE! Despite the fact there are 18 tracks on this album (plus a killer DVD), Les Savy Fav keeps me yearning for more. Since 1995 the band have released three full-lengths, as well as one EP, but INCHES is the one album the band has been working on since their inception which is one reason of much this release is so amazing. INCHES is the documentation of the young band's ambitious evolution into the art of music, from oldest member to the present. The DVD includes highlights their dynamic live shows. This Brooklyn quartet brings a new meaning to art-rock, while tossing in heavy bass lines, crashing cymbals, and keyboards that get you dancing. INCHES is out now on bassist Syd Butler's very own French Kiss Records, an amazing label which encourages artistic freedom a perfect home for the implausible Les Savy Fav.

-Michelle your Belle



LIFE IN PICTURES
SONGS FROM THE SAWMILL
LIMEKILN

On Life in Pictures five-song EP, the Arizona five-piece offer up some quality chaotic hardcore replete with intricate dueling guitars, sick drum work, and crushing breakdowns interspersed throughout (see Red Fall for a taste). It even boasts a nice little grindcore growl in there amidst the constant screamed vocals). And when coupled with the band's thought-provoking socio-political commentary (as exemplified on An Aging Monolith, a song comprised of lyrics calling us to action against death and destruction caused by this beacon of injustice and hate that is the corporate state, rallying us to tear it down again, set us free [...] from your church, from your state [...] from your gods, from your masters [...] Break the chains that confine our lives), SONGS FROM THE SAWMILL becomes even that much more impressive and essential.

-Janelle Jones



LIL POCKETKNIFE
PANTS CONTROL EP
NARNACK RECORDS

The S.F. trio known as Lil Pocketknife specialize in kicking out some old-school hip-hop-flavored rhymes set to disco/hardcore/electro dance beats that will make you want to get up off your feet. Just check the robotic vocals on 5/2 which comes complete with Alan videogame sound effects and a chorus that boasts I'm 5/2 and I can conquer you. The disc also features some fabulous artwork from Karen Richter (whom you hipsters may know for her pop-art graphics in The Joggers Hot Autism video). You can find some great mp3s at narnackrecords.com.

-Jude Ruiz

when a cd is great, I get all giggly gay.



LINDSAY SMITH
WERE YOU PROM QUEEN?
FRUITBAT

Believe it or not, Lindsay Smith's engaging album title has a purpose, and it's not to duel Courtney Love for pole position. This classically-trained vocalist actually campaigned for the aforementioned role of prom queen during her high-school years, an event in her life that shapes *WERE YOU PROM QUEEN?* quite a bit. Ironically enough, tracks like "One Fish, Two Fish," "Apples Red," and "I Don't Like Drinking" of this 13-track endeavor have a light, free feeling, almost like a high-school dance soundtrack. Yet underneath all of the melodic rays of sunshine lie a sardonic wit, a powerful folk rock voice, and some snappy tunes. While from a passing listen you may hear snippets of soothing sounds of Natalie Merchant and the pop sensibilities of Lisa Loeb, there's worlds more going on behind the scenes of this pseudo-folk rock-meets-80s pop album that requires a keen ear and a sharp sense of humor to appreciate.

-Mike SOS



LISA DEWEY AND THE LOTUS LIFE
BUSK (BELLA UNION/KITCHEN WHORE)
KITCHEN WHORE RECORDS

The fourth full-length release from San Francisco-based folk diva Lisa Dewey and her backup band the Lotus Life, is full of muscular, female-fronted pop in the vein of Tanya Donelly and Belly. Though her original songs all start out as folk numbers, the addition of the backup band turns the tunes into dreamy, ethereal melodies that seem to float across one's consciousness. Some of the finest moments on the disc are Dewey's incredible, dubbed backup vocal harmonies. In a live show it would take a trio of backup singers to do what she does on the album. The only real weakness in the album, the similarity of the 10 songs, is also, in a way, one of the album's strengths, as the songs seem to blend together like a hazy memory of a long afternoon. (Dewey is also the owner of Kitchen Whore Records, a West Coast indie label that specializes in unique, uncompromising artists.)

-DUG



LITTLE FEAT
KICKIN' IT AT THE BARN
HOT TOMATO RECORDS

Someone shoot me now. I don't like apple pie for dessert, and I don't like it in my CD player. Sure, they're very talented and important to a lot of fans, but in 2004 it's simple, scary honky tonk, people! With lyrics like, "I need a night out on the town followed by a dueling squeezebox and violin solo, I start to picture DELIVERANCE and men squealing like pigs. I ran screaming for as far as I could from the country fair for a reason. This is America at its most evil. Please make it stop!"

-Jasten King



LIVING THINGS
RESIGHT YOUR RIGHTS EP
DREAMWORKS

A lot of bands use that old "I'm cool and love The Stooges" card to the end of the road but never deliver. Now, for once, someone has, and it actually shows. Here's an honest version of Iggy with a modern addition of...well, balls. Picture KISS as tough as they were in those comic books but with a whole lot of balls. Keeping each song pounding and different from the next, Living Things deliver rock n' roll in the gritty, evil way it was meant. With Steve Albini behind the tables to get it as swampy as possible, turn it up to 11 and start growing your long, black hair back.

-Jasten King



LOCAL PANIC
THE LEMUR CHRONICLES
SELF-RELEASED

I appreciate honesty. The fact that in their bio Local Panic states that although the band has been together for six years you might have noticed how little we've accomplished scores major points with me. These kids are slackers, but at least they know they're slackers. With that, they deliver half-inspired skate punk in the vein of early Pennywise, only with about a quarter of the talent, urgency, and potential that made that band such an incredible force in the '90s.

-FLINT



LUBRICATED GOAT
THE GREAT OLD ONES
REPTILIAN RECORDS

Lead vocalist Stu sounds like a 40-year-old man who has smoked way too many cigarettes. The music is very basic rock n' roll, with the occasional grungy/punk twist. Apparently, the band has been touring since 1986, but I've never heard of them, nor has any of my friends. The music is very in your face and recorded in a way that gives it a very garage-rock feel. The sound and name make them the perfect band for a fraternity party.

-ADF



MACHINE HEAD
THROUGH THE ASHES OF EMPIRES
ROADRUNNER

Machine Head's career has come full circle, as the band's latest release is a highly touted return to the band's epic sound. *THROUGH THE ASHES OF EMPIRES* finds Rob Flynn and company making a comeback to the bruising metal assault that gave the Bay Area band its greatest notoriety, thanks to the band's rekindled approach to songwriting and Colin Richardson expert mixing skills. From the opening drum blasts of "Imperium," the fiery delivery that the outfit sorely lacked in its previous endeavors roars back with a vengeance. Tracks like the momentum-gaining "Days Turn Blue to Gray" showcase the visceral brutality and heavy-handed hooks that made Machine Head one of the more successful metal bands in the '90s. Yet, these songs display a more mature and reflective side of the band. It's this kind of musical realizations that pop up all over this 10-track release, along with Flynn's lyrical exorcisms on "Left Unfinished" and "Descend the Shades of Night," that make *THROUGH THE ASHES OF EMPIRES* the best Machine Head record to date and allow the outfit to definitively stake claim to the top of the metal realm again.

-Mike SOS



MAGGI, PIERCE AND E.J.
MAGGI, PIERCE AND E.J.
MAGGI, PIERCE AND E.J.

This post-folk duo has a warm, upbeat sound with an occasional dash of funk. The trio varies its vocal arrangement among the tracks, which keeps things fresh and interesting. (Maggi far and away offers the superlative vocal presence.) This is an excellent CD for a game of Hacky Sack out in the sun with your friends. There is also a nod to the hot jazz revival sound here, as on Scott Young's "Jaded," which recalls early Squirrel Nut Zippers. Then the band swings into solid AAA songwriting with the doo-wop pop of the hip-hop flavored "Mr. Moon." This is the fifth album from the group. They generally go with colors instead of names for their albums, so this is the gold album. www.mpeband.com

-Tom Tearaway Schulte

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listening to music is so delightful



MARC SEAL
4-SONG DEMO
WWW.MARCEAL.COM

Never has a man been more baffled by a review before this one. I sat down, pressed play, and instantly got dizzy. It could have been the four previous days of drinking, but that didn't seem to affect me earlier. The reality that I'm listening to a guitar virtuoso play his compositions just, well, hurts. Weak, formulaic, well-trained suburban mediocrity is far from impressive to me. This is Journey rock for a new generation of stupid people.

-FLINT



MITHRAS
WORLDS BEYOND THE VEIL
CANDLELIGHT

Mithras is an English death-metal outfit whose 13-track offering has all of the makings of a mighty force in the extreme music realm. Ambient interludes capture a surreal feeling, like the uneasy calm before the storm, anticipating the brutality that follows. And follow it does, as this progressive quartet meshes its savagery with sounds that soothe so well that it sounds as if two separate bands are performing on one disc. If you're a big fan of Nile and its musicianship, chances are you'll truly appreciate the artisan style meets gripping chokehold that the music of Mithras bestows on you. www.candlelightrecords.com

MODEST MOUSE
GOOD NEWS FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE BAD NEWS
EPIC

Modest Mouse, Isaac Brock's main band, has added a guitarist and a new drummer, but the members' amazing rapport is undamaged, and the music is as brilliant and fresh as ever. This is 45 minutes of a band fully in its stride and committed to its art. A bit surprising is the lack of even a single song that meanders in that breathtaking MM way. Perhaps that's because this album is (seemingly, at least) their most Cure-influenced (*The View* bears some resemblance to *The Walk*); the drum sounds and pipe-like keys are reminiscent of those on *THE TOF*, *Float On* (maybe my new favorite dance song) is something Robert Smith would've written had he woken up in Brock's reality) although they sound nothing like The Cure. Also present are some expected ghosts (most notably Pixies, as on the percussive and incredibly fun *Bury Me With It*). But as well as MM can incorporate influences in a wholly original way, their uniqueness also breeds songs that seem to come out of nowhere, such as the touchingly compelling *One Chance*. And, as always, Brock shows himself to be the most complex lyricist there has ever been (sample: All them eager actors gladly taking credit for the lines created by the people tucked away from sight is just a window from the room we're bound to). If you find a way out, oh would you just let me know how?). Additionally, this release boasts MM's most involved arrangements to date, from Brock's multiple background-vocal overdubs (further showcasing his unorthodox self-harmonizing (again echoing Smith)) to incorporating The Dirty Dozen Brass Band to input from recent tourmates The Hackensaw Boys and The Flaming Lips. Modest Mouse is absolutely everything I like about music, and this album is pure Modest Mouse.

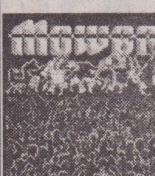
-Gregory Moore



MONDAY'S HERO
LOVE CARRIES AN AXE
LUCID RECORDS

As a movement, emo is dead, but these bands keep inexplicably popping up everywhere. Since most emo bands possess about as many distinguishing characteristics as a headless John Doe in the county morgue, critics and fans are left to sort out the differences in the most boring way possible: by listening to their music. Chicago's Monday's Hero is the latest offender, and their unfortunately-titled debut, *LOVE CARRIES AN AXE*, will undoubtedly impress those rebel-rebels obsessed with Jets to Brazil and The Get Up Kids (i.e., bands that all sound the same). Here's the boring story again: four losers band together in their dorm to whine about how terribly slightly interesting punk chicks treated them in high school. It's the heart and soul of rock 'n' roll wrapped in a striped sweater and faded jeans.

-jcak



MOWER
MOWER
SUBURBAN NOIZE

Mower is an explosive quintet from San Diego whose metallic rap rock attack is, believe or not, as real as it gets. The outfit's latest 13-track release is a slamming showcase of chugging guitars and aggressive melodies with hook-laden choruses that are sure to stick in your skull long after the CD is out of the player. Despite Mower utilizing many of the current and tired techniques of the rap-rock genre (such as the dual sing/scream effect) the difference between Mower and any generic band signed to a big label is that Mower's music is sharp, grating, and ultimately, way goddammed heavier than anything these flavor of the week clowns can muster. Check out the neck snapping *Wrestle With The Pig* or the frenetic pace of *Snitch* for proof. Yet there's comedic elements within Mower as well, deliciously displayed in between songs, when they get a few of the band's friends to explain the song's titles or go off into drunken diatribes. In short, Mower's music cuts through all the crap that is usually associated with bands that rap while rocking and instead leaves you with crushing riffs, heavy hooks, and above all, a kick ass vibe.

-Mike SOS



MUTE
SLEEPERS
MILK & COOKIES RECORDS

Is this a Christian band? (Thanks, Ronnie.) If you go to the Website, the first thing you notice is that they are looking for a new guitarist. I say they should look for a whole new band. On the cover it says melodic punk: it should say moronic punk. A bunch of stupid drum beats followed by some really lame guitar riffs makes for a really bad album. Look at the name of the CD itself, because that is what it will make you do: sleep. Only thing cool about this album was the packaging, so why to go, press.

-Ian Wilkins



NO HOLLYWOOD ENDING
IT'S ALL A NIGHTMARE
NO MILK

Oh no. This is the worst thing I've heard since Horse the Band. Totally ludicrous post-punk metalcore with sound effects and Casio wanks. Gang shout-outs and relapses into melodic skateboard punk (of all things) only confirm how stupid this band is. What the fuck are they thinking? Hey, dudes, let's all throw our favorite band names into the middle of the jam-space, paste them together, and come out with the shittiest possible combination! Just imagine The Blood Brothers, Death by Stereo, The Locust, Fearless Records' crap of the week, and Hot Hot Heat melting into an enormous ball of dung. And they have the audacity to claim this will appeal to Maiden fans! You have to be joking! Any self-respecting banger would beat the shit out of these wankers as soon as they pulled into the heavy-metal parking lot wearing their fur-lined jackets. Fuck me for even being in the same room as this piece of garbage.

-Jason Schreurs

NUMBER ONE FAN COMPROMISES

PAT S RECORD COMPANY

Everything about this young indie-pop outfit from Appleton, WI, from their sound to their lyrics, can be summed up into a few words: innocent, approachable, fresh. Their sound is poppy, but not without depth and is characterized by steady drums, melodic guitars, and youthful but skilled vocals. Each layer of the songs combines complexity and talent to comprise simply catchy tunes. The lyrics showcase this innocence, approachability, and freshness (such as on the first track, *Come On*: Don't be afraid of it / Falling in love); but they also display an unexpected wisdom and maturity (as in *Nothing Will Change*: Don't go away yet / I haven't felt this dead in years / This room's full of people / With drinks in their hands / And nothing but nothing to say). There's a complexity resonating in this band's youthfulness, which definitely calls to be discovered by dozens of soon-to-be fans. www.numberonefanonline.com

-tChow



OPPRESSED LOGIC
ONES THAT CONTROL
BLAZING GUNS RECORDS

In a time of ever-increasing harmonies, melodies, and trucker hats, I was beginning to lose hope that true punk rock would survive the trends. Let's all give Oppressed Logic a big round of applause for surviving the bullshit. Simple screams and group shouts layered on top of hard drum beats and screeching electric guitar riffs make for one hell of a CD (not to mention the carefully selected movie quotes separating each song). All in all, I would say this CD served more as a breath of fresh air and a reminder that punk is a lifestyle, a cause, and one hell of an artoff. I would say everyone go out and get this CD and go to their shows but chances are you would all contaminate it.

-Carley Charpentier



OWNERLESS DOG
SELF-TITLED
SELF-RELEASED

This seven-song EP from San Francisco-based Japanese indie band Ownerless Dog, is a disc without a country, an album without a soul, or perhaps, a band without a vision. I love sushi, samurai, premium ginjo sake, and all things Japanese except the huge crop of garage-style rock bands that sound like The Vines singing unintelligible English/Japanese/French lyrics to their weak offerings. To their credit, Ownerless Dog does have one okay song on this disc, an alt-rock anthem titled *Hello Stoner*, where the band actually does play some entertaining comedy-rock for about a minute-and-a-half. There are a few good guitar licks on this album, but the overall impression is of a band trying to imitate bad American rock bands from the 60s and 70s. It would be far better for a band to sing in their native language and maybe take a cue from some homegrown music than rehash crap that was tired when it came out here 30 years ago. On the bright side, they do look pretty cool in their press photos, kind of like an Asian surf-punk band-DUG



FALLON COLLAPSE
SOME WILDERNESS
KANINE RECORDS

They're smart, they went to NYU; they're cultured, they met in London, and they're actually able to transcend any masturbatory art-rock, Anglophilic tendencies. At first they sound like Q and not U, complete with woo woos, but they have less of a Dischord punk edge and more of an NYC indie band sound, yet they make you want to dance. What? Exactly. It's a kinetic onslaught. With or without vocals, the unremitting drumming and quizzical chords maintain a beat that is frenetic yet clear, and one sure to result in relentless rump-shaking. An indie band from NYC that stands out without essentially being a cover band? That's something special.

-Erika Owens



FALLEN HEROES
SELF-RELEASED

On P36's second album, the guys look within for much of the lyrical subject matter. Extremely insightful and introspective, many songs deal with pushing on and persevering despite hardships and the cruelty of life, as on songs like *Speed Bump* and the interestingly-titled *Tomorrow Was the Worst Day of My Life*. In contrast, the extremely emotional *Knight in Dull Armor* is quite melancholy, depicting the narrator as full of pain and kind of hopeless. These guys do show potential with their melodic brand of punk, as they're young, sound pretty genuine, and seem like admirable songwriters. While *FALLEN HEROES* isn't horrible, I do believe P36 can hone their skills even more within the next couple years and come up with something that shows just how good they can be.

-Janelle Jones



PAINT THE TOWN RED/RISE AND FALL
WEAPONS
JTT

Two tracks each from two bands that hit hard. I was so impressed by this four-song compilation that I was going to take some string and wear this disc as a necklace. Unfortunately, I already used all my string tying my roommate to the mailbox last weekend. Belgium's Paint the Town Red have been rebuilding the spirits of a down-and-out audience since 2001. Their two-song offering had me deeply ashamed of every accomplishment that's ever been done easily, feeling that the only things worth having are achieved through struggle. Bravo. *Rise and Fall* is a gift from Munich, Germany. It takes a trained ear to decipher the lyrical growl in *Running Out of Time* and *Give and Take*, but once you do, it's worth the ringing ears. Full-bodied questions arise, such as Where do we go when we've burned every bridge? and How can I believe in this world when I've seen it all fall apart? Look for both full-length albums to be released August 16th.

-Thomas Murray



PARANOIDS
THE PARTY'S OVER
UNSIGNED

Take mod (Kinks), glam (Sweet, Bowie), and top of the line pop melody mastery and rub magic on it, and you get Damon Larson (ax, vox, and songwriter) at the wheel of a fab group, *Paranoids*. Damon's voice is a little David Bowie, Alex Chilton, Tyson Meade, and a new voice, strong and cool. Not to say that *Paranoids* is a one-man gig. Bass player and vocalist Jonathon Marquez is picking the low end brightly, and his vocals mold and lead and make the whole work of higher quality. Elliot Kiger (drums) is a pounder with grace and panache. I love bands that sing about being in a band, so, my favorite singles are *Record Store* and *Rock and Roll Toy*. The title song is a classic. *THE PARTY'S OVER* (a five-track EP) is double fab terrif super.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



PECCADILLOES
THE AWFUL TRUTH
SELF-RELEASED

Peccadilloes are a punk rock group from Las Vegas. This album is just a four-song EP, and it's alright. It isn't that spectacular or anything. It sounds like it was recorded fairly cheaply. The vocals sound too loud. I can't imagine it selling in stores or anything. I imagine it's mostly to sell at their shows...so I don't know why they'd want me to review it. Maybe to see their name in print? Hello! They sound like Minor Threat musically with female vocals. I'd check them out live if I got the chance. They have a full-length album coming out in the fall.

-chad

i want them to bring back the 8-track.



PETER DISTEFANO
GRATITUDE
SANCTUARY RECORDS

My first thought when I pressed play on this CD was that this guy's sound is a lot like Jane's Addiction which is definitely a good thing. With a little further research, I realized that Distefano was once a guitarist for Porno for Pyros (the Jane's Addiction offshoot). On GRATITUDE, Distefano exhibits his own individual talents and musical tastes while holding on to many of his Porno for Pyros influences. This sober album mixes California beach pop with synthesized vocals and screeching electric guitar riffs to ultimately produce a damn good record. It hits store shelves in early May, so make sure to check it out.

-Carley Charpentier



PIEBAL'D
ALL EARS, ALL EYES, ALL THE TIME
SIDEONEDEMUMMY

I didn't care much for Piebal'd when they were relevant, and I can't say much has changed now. It's still four dudes constantly evolving their sound to what's current and fronted by a dude with a slightly awkward singing style that I just can't get into. Not charming and forgivable like Tim Kinsella, not damn awful like that guy from Thursday, just slightly awkward. In a nutshell, this record captures the low points of three bands that I enjoy: J Church, Jets to Brazil, and Ben Folds Five. Just picture DRAMA OF ALIENATION-era Lance singing with ORANGE RHYMING DICTIO-

NARY-era Jets to Brazil accompanied by the now solo Ben Folds on piano. It's not bad, just not interesting. The record comes off as so bland and generic that it seems harmless, but over the course of the album it begins to feel unwelcoming, like an inferior substitute for something familiar and accepted.

-Wally P.



PRO-PAIN
FISTFUL OF HATE
CANDLELIGHT

At first listen, I hated this album, no question about it. These New York metalcore veterans had done nothing for me. I put the album aside. Then two weeks later I decided to give FISTFUL OF HATE a second chance, and it grew on me. Pro Pain is violent, simple, and more core than metal. While their lyrics can sometimes come off as corny, it is always refreshing to see an older band come back after a hiatus and still be pissed. I found myself sheepishly singing along to tracks like "Can You Feel It?" and "Cut Throat". With lyrics like "So, are you sick of me yet? / Because I sick of you, too, how can you not find it in you to shout along? Although FISTFUL OF HATE might not be for everyone, it will be enjoyed by those who like it mid-tempo, heavy, and pissed off.

-Darren Davis



PROBOT
PROBOT
SOUTHERN LORD

This may be the metal album of the decade and the funny thing about it is that it comes from an artist you'd never expect. Dave Grohl, best known as the drummer for Nirvana, head honcho of Foo Fighters, and everyone's favorite hired gun (just ask Queens of the Stone Age and Killing Joke) has compiled an 11-track metal album that brings real metal back into the spotlight. Grohl's pet project is an ambitious endeavor, picking up where Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi's latest solo work left off. Grohl wrote and arranged some kick-ass metal tunes, and, much like Iommi, farmed out the vocals to some of metal's luminary vocalists. The end result is a crushing album that reads like a who's who of metal: Cronos (Venom), Max Cavalera (Sepultura), Lemmy (Motorhead), Mike Dean (COC), Kurt Brecht (DR), Lee Dorrian (Cathedral), Wino (The Obsessed, Spirit Caravan), Tom G. Warrior (Celtic Frost), Snake (Voivod), Eric Wagner (Trouble), and the majestic King Diamond lend their talents to one of the most engaging metal releases in recent memory. A must have for any self-respecting metal fan, Probot hits all sorts of metal and may garnish Grohl the respect he richly deserves as a true musical genius. www.southernlord.com

-Mike SOS



PROOF
S/T
PIGEON ENGLISH

It has never ceased to be amazing when a band can combine the organic honesty of simple instruments and the complex layers of synthetic sounds. It is truly a daunting task to undertake, but when a band achieves this elusive goal, it makes for a truly interesting and impressive album. Proof is one of those bands. Though their album may not combine the levels of organic and synthetic sound as innovatively and brilliantly as others who have pursued the same idea, it does hold its own amidst similar artists. Similarities can be drawn between American Analog Set, as well as other under-appreciated indie-rock acts. Warm, resonating rhythms, tumbling drums, and a monotonous vocalist all combine to make a likeable sound. www.proofband.org

-iChow



wannabe reviewer: Jason Schreurs

NEVER SAY: Anything bad about your local postal workers.
WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN REVIEWING A CD: That slim chance a new band might blow me away.
THIS MONTH I WILL NOT: Continually obsess over finding redeeming qualities in totally unredeemable bands. Metalcore being the biggest culprit.



PSYOPUS

IDEAS OF REFERENCE

BLACK MARKET ACTIVITIES

Psyopus is a Rochester, NY-based quartet whose static structures provide sonic salvation for those who crave experimental metal. IDEAS OF REFERENCE liberally borrows from bands like Canidina, Dillinger Escape Plan, and Mr. Bungle, yet the guys in the band strive (and succeed) to go a step further by making the extremes a bit more extreme than expected. For example, take Death, i... a jazzy improv number from the onset that turns itself into a screaming, chaotic speed-metal grindfest. The rest of the nine-track album follows suit, as Psyopus throws convention out the window and meshes the craziest parts of extreme metal together for an uneasy yet undeniably interesting listen.

-Mike SOS



QUARTERLIFE CRISIS
FORGET THE TIME
DEMO

Quarterlife Crisis are a young band from New York. They sound similar to a new commercial rock band like Thrice. The album consists of thundering drums that never cease and guitar riffs to match. The vocals go in between yelling and a rap-type rhythm. Many of their songs are dark and discuss one of life's many problems. They possess an immense amount of energy that is always respectable and noticeable on the album.

-Jennifer Moncayo



RAG MEN
RAG MEN
EULOGY RECORDINGS

If you are a fan of Hatebreed or Madball, then don't even finish reading this review just go out and buy Rag Men's new album. Yeah, it is that good. It's not punk, it's just some hard-core walk into a bar and beat the crap out of some people playing darts -type of shit. I have heard of a triple-bass on a drum set, but is it possible to have a quadruple-bass? Is it possible to keep my eyes from bleeding when I hear Insomnia? Well, hell, I don't care. All I care about is you going out buying this CD so they can go ahead and make another one album, and then another one. Rag Men have four members in the band, and I am sure they all met in a prison break. Go to their Website www.eulogyrecordings.com and check it out.

-ian Wilkins



READ YELLOW
RADIOS BURN FASTER
FENWAY RECORDINGS

Read Yellow got their deal at Fenway through the Peter-to-Jesus of grunge, Chris Novoseelic. This MA four-piece has merged the new way and the cool way. On a lot of fronts, Read Yellow sound typical of mid-tempo, tough-man-in-black-T rock, but then they add a little of that Boston scene eccentricities (la The Cars and The Pixies), and...well, man, you got something worth listening to. Some of the candidates for highlight moment include The Easiest Part of Surveillance, Model America, and Modern Phobias. Read Yellow could be next year's breakout band. Keep your eye on the college kids with the loud guitars. RADIOS BURN FASTER could be the start of something big.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



REVENGE SF/DJ SHITBIRD
WELCOME TO THE PARTY
NARNACK RECORDS

One faithful night in San Francisco, members of Coachwhips and Numbers (to name a few) got together, seemingly got trashed, and recorded an album under a ridiculous name. Seemingly, the band was trying to recreate an album that would document just how much fun a mix of drunken debauchery and noodling with various musical instruments could be. Unfortunately, instead of WELCOME TO THE PARTY sounding like a soundtrack to get down to, it plays like joke you seemed to have to be there for to get. Everyone loves songs about partying, but as Andrew WK will tell you, it gets old fast. It's all very fun and kooky, but after a while, who the hell really wants to listen?

-Matt Siblo



R'NR
THE INFAMOUS AND NOTORIOUS
MANIC RIDE

The INFAMOUS AND NOTORIOUS is a melting pot of 80s hardcore punk and '70s thrashing guitar licks, finding R'NR aiming their tuneful guitars and to a mass crowd of diverse souls. With the lyrical and vocal approach screaming hardcore and the delightful guitar complexity reflecting the AC/DC style. R'NR are one of those bands that are shockingly overlooked. This 10-track CD has a little something for everyone. From the hardcore enthusiasts to punk-rooted fanatics to long lost rock n rollers to metal headbangers, you won't be disappointed. Allow yourself to enter a new spectrum that is best stated as R'NR.

-Courtney Riot



ROBOTS IN DISGUISE
SELF-TITLED
RECALL RECORDS

What is better than two British girls singing smooth synth-pop songs? The answer is: two British girls singing smooth synth-pop songs while Chris Corner of Sneaker Pimps programs the drum machine. Sound like something straight off of a movie soundtrack, Robots in Disguise provide very ambient and melodic songs that will get you humming along. Sharing similarities with Azure Ray and Rio Kiley, Robots in Disguise still manage to carve out a unique British electronic sound.

-ADF



RUE
SELF-TITLED
SELF-RELEASED

What the world doesn't need now is another fashionably questionable, female-fronted modern rock act...yet, that's exactly what Rue deliver on this self-titled EP. They've got good intentions, but if the history of rock n roll has taught us anything, it's that good intentions are enough to drown a band in their own mediocrity. Think Heart, only smarmier and without the killer hooks, and you're getting close to what Rue's shoveling.

-Jason Jett

i wrote better lyrics in third grade.



RUNAWAY ORANGE
THE CUTTING ROOM
NO MILK

A good emo record will give you that feeling in your gut when the deranged, heartbroken singer recites that line that you swear was written for you. Runaway Orange's THE CUTTING ROOM has no such moments. I did not believe a word this quartet from New Jersey said. While tracks 'It Can't Be Me' and 'Darkened Nights and Night Lights' were somewhat catchy, the remainder of the record is fluff. I was particularly confused on the track 'Heartache to Heartache', where the vocalist, who sounded decent throughout the album, crashed and burned into some nasally, whining three minutes.

-Darren Davis

S AINT WILLY
MEAT

KAOM.COM

The opening track, 'All of God's Creatures Are Delicious with Beer', is a blast of an arena-rock anthem for the carnivorous. Luckily, it is the only song of its kind on the CD, as the novelty of it surely wouldn't last any longer. In sharp contrast to the first, the remaining three tracks sound like drunken sing-alongs. To Saint Willy's credit, though, he is far more musically-inclined than the average drunk uncle, as all of the songs feature are richly layered and marked by his clever wordplay. Not bad for a guy in a neon purple wig.

-Casey Clague

SCEPTIC

UNBELIEVER'S SCRIPT

CANDLELIGHT

What instantly grabbed me about this album is that Sceptic has produced extremely fast and abnormal metal songs without becoming just another grind or blast-beat band. With UNBELIEVER'S SCRIPT, they have proven that metal is far from dead in Poland. My favorite track is easily 'Shapeless Entity', which is about all you could ask for in a thrash-metal song. I'd recommend this one for fans of Misery Index, Extol, and even Krisiun.

-Zac

SHARKS AND MINNOWS

THE COST OF LIVING

TWO SHEDS MUSIC

THE COST OF LIVING is the third album from Sharks and Minnows, who are quite fond of creating some jolting pop tunes. A lot of this album has that David Bowie jolt, though, where the songs come at you with just enough power to make your head turn but are never overbearing. 'Saint of Anything' is my favorite track, soaking chords for what their worth in a 1-2 beat while showing some cool riffs inside. THE COST OF LIVING is simple, honest, and never pretentious. You might even call it pleasant.

-Darren Ratner

SHOCKWAVE

THE ULTIMATE DOOM

TRIPLE CROWN

These guys have alter-egos, utilizing mysterious monikers. But rather than playing old-school punk and singing about the finer things in life, Shockwave play brutal hardcore and abide by a lifestyle rooted in the old TRANSFORMERS cartoon. Their press release summarizes their purpose well: Shockwave is using hardcore as a tool to mix toys, music, and theatrical humor in order to have a good time. That's the funny part; because the music is so goddamn heavy and oppressive, you'd think the band are really pissed about SOMETHING; but the apocalyptic lyrics certainly can be taken with a proverbial grain of salt.

-Janelle Jones

SIGN OF ONE

SELF-TITLED DEMO

SELF-RELEASED

Hey Sign of One, Slipknot and Incubus called, and they want their musical styles back. Just when you thought the nu-metal fad was over, another lame band releases a demo. If you're into Limp Bizkit, Korn, Incubus, Papa Roach, and Slipknot, then Sign of One has created the perfect album for you. If you are not into nu-metal, then Sign of One can even pay you to listen to this generic album.

-ADF

SINGLE FRAME

WETHEADS COME RUNNING

VOLCOM ENTERTAINMENT

In the background of some over-budget sci-fi movie, you can hear something like Single Frame. Oddball brainiac moments combine with twisted minimalist key and guitar work, all while free-jazz drumming and abstract lyrics throw random choruses and verses and free-style and Christ knows what. At once dark and goofy, WETHEADS COME RUNNING would seem excessive if it weren't for inspired moments like 'Post-Dream Forecast Endeavor', 'Mod Style 68', and 'Space dust and Handcuffs'. The ability to delve into the abstract without losing the concentration of the melodies makes for an esoteric headphone masterpiece.

-Rob Macy

ing doom, oblivion, and

SHOCKWAVE

THE ULTIMATE DOOM

TRIPLE CROWN

SHOCKWAVE

THE ULTIMATE DOOM

when a cd is great, i get all giggly gay.

STREET DOGS/THE DENTS
ROUND ONE / A SPLIT CD
ABBEY LOUNGE RECORDS

This is a Boston project. The first half of this four-song sampler is Street Dogs. Street Dogs singer is former Dropkick Murphys Mike McColgan. This punk rocker/fireman sings with authority. Street Dogs is in your face with blue-collar zeal and muscle. But in the end, I thought their sound was a bit typical. The Dents were rocking with original, cool, and snotty vocals from bassist Michelle Paulhus and rhythm axstress Jen Rassler. The sound is more art-school cool than alleyway tough. The Dents second song, "Mental Defective," is sweet, cruising, hot-day rocking.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

SURF
THE RED LEAVES RUIN
FIVE AND DIME RECORDS

Chances are that this album will have you feeling as though your heart has been surgically removed against your will. This band certainly has a unique sound. Sometimes, a new sound is met by the open arms of a trendy sub-culture sprout searching for a sound to call its own. At other times, a new sound will struggle and flop around the stage like a catfish on a dock, eventually dying and rotting, forgotten. The strides taken by this band to stand out are unnecessary or annoying, at best. Maybe I just didn't get it, but nothing seemed to go together. I would not buy this album and cannot (with good conscience) recommend that you do. The album title is clever, though, a little play on words/double-meaning for us to ponder while forcing the screwdriver in and out of our eardrums.

SYSTEMS OFFICER
SELF-TITLED
ACE FU RECORDS

The solo debut of Pinback member Armistead Burwell Smith IV (a.k.a. Zach) is an upbeat five-song EP that has a vaguely '80s feel to it. With catchy tunes that sound like a cross between Brian Eno and The Buggles, ABS IV has come up with a dreamy style that will serve him well on the alternative/emo circuit. In spite of the bouncy music, the theme of this CD couldn't be much darker. Every song deals with sinking, submersion, smothering, falling, and heading for a stairway leading down. This is a great first effort, but the true test will be a full-length

album that doesn't become another Morrissey death march.

-DUG

TEAM SPIDER
BUSH BUSH BUSH
INDEPENDENT RELEASE

Okay, I'm sorry, but I can't help but start laughing. Is this supposed to be funny? Coming from Manhattan's cable-access team, there's a good chance I'm right. After hearing "Bush, Bush, Bush / Bombs, bombs, bombs / Dumb, dumb, dumb / The Constitution a thousand times in the opening, I now can't get this joke out of my head. From there it goes to a confusing Misfits cover to some nursery rhymes to a conga jam all mixed with a muffled political agenda. I don't know where to go with this, and I have a feeling they don't, either. Let's just say it's one of those so bad it's good things. A good laugh.

-Josten King

TEXAS THIEVES
FORCED VACATION
SUPERSPEEDWAY MUSIC

San Francisco's Texas Thieves remind me of why I started liking punk in the first place. This band reminds me of my beloved D.I., with song titles like, "Trash on the Beach," "Crucifixes Are for Kids," "Dying of Stress." The band is seasoned cool and hammer hard. Foz's vocals come across like regular guy snarling in a cheese-eating grin disguise. The music is simple and comfortably loose with spells of rocking like a hurricane. FORCED VACATION is a sweet punk-rock finger and wedge. I love this disc.

-H. Barry Zimmerman

wannabe reviewer: Chad

NEVER SAY: I told you so, unless you really mean it
WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN REVIEWING A CD: Fixing my grammar so I appear more learned
THIS MONTH I WILL NOT: miss a secret viewing of the new MC5 movie in my local underground movie theatre!

THE BLAM
CAVEAT EMPTOR
SELF-RELEASED

These days, super hip New York bands seem to be sprouting out of the boroughs like stalks in a cornfield. That's why it should come as a surprise to precisely no one that The Blam, being both super hip and from the Big Apple, appear to be riding the straight-away (Parliament Lights first) into all sorts of great things. Their 2003 self-titled debut inspired kind words from ALTERNATIVE PRESS and NME and enjoyed a mini-stint as the fourth most-added college radio record in the U.S. of A. The 10 songs on CAVEAT EMPTOR blend the minimalist garage-fuzz of The Strokes with the sass of "Stellarstar" and an abundant breath of fresh air. Caveat Empotor flouts ringing guitars and warm distortion, and the blissful pulse of "It's Not Personal" is charming in all the right ways. It probably couldn't hurt to snag this independently-released disc before it gets swallowed up by Sony Music and becomes a collector's item.

-Dave Kargol

THE BLINDING LIGHT
THE ASCENSION ATTEMPT
DEATHWISH

Nowadays, it's either the Westside or the East Coast who throw out the essential hardcore bands out there. No one really lays down that scene anymore in the Midwest...until you find out that The Blinding Light exists, anyway. Their style within a single song can fluctuate anywhere from grinding guitars to cynical, melodic breaks (particularly in "Hydrant"). As for their lyrical style, they ditch the insightful poetic lines and go for the short and sweet. (Well, they stretch out every word when they sing, so yeah, it would have to be short.) Otherwise, the CD would be 42 hours and 31 minutes instead of 42 minutes and 31 seconds.

-Mabel Lam

THE CAPSULES
SOMEONE FOR EVERYONE
URININE RECORDS

The sophomore full-length release from this Kansas trio is an ethereal treat, as Julie Shields becomes the Midwestern Dolores O'Riordan. Shields's beautiful, overlaid harmonies actually outdo The Cranberries for most of this disc, as the band ties together velvety hooks to create a sonic wonderland. Melodic vocals, soaring synth-guitar, and mellow acoustic guitar dominate the 11 tunes on this album. Since playing its first show in 2000, the band has toured both Europe and America, been featured on MTV, and played the Lollapalooza side stage. With an album as strong and consistent as this, it is hard to believe The Capsules will be on the side stage much longer.

-DUG

THE CHIEFS
HOLLY-WEST CRISIS
DOCTOR STRANGE

We're on a roll this month with good wholesome punk rock n' roll! Orange County has graced us with a variety of heart and soul, but as it seems old-school punk rock is one of their strongest points. The Chiefs latest release, HOLLY-WEST CRISIS, is a collection of every single recording they've ever done (yeah, a whopping 13 tracks!). Still, they are both effective and powerful. This is a perfect example of what it was all about. Forget that pop-punk, emo-ridden devastation we've had to endure and sink your teeth into pure old-school punk rock n' roll. If you like GBH, Blitz, and other classic icons, The Chiefs HOLLY-WEST CRISIS will captivate your musical taste buds in a refreshing way.

-Courtney Riot

THE DIGITAL KILL
SELF-TITLED

This six-song demo begins as raw as it is dark. Simply, a category of schremo would not justify the complexity and intricacy that is placed into each of these six- to seven-minute tracks. Moody vocals and intricate guitar riffs span the entire album with instrumentally strong and eerie interludes. Each song is a linear story that has a long build-up to an emotional finale with gut-wrenching screams and crashing high hats. The emotional rage that pours from the normally moody vocals is as agonizing as it is intense. The Digital Kill has Radiohead-like tracks and progressions with a punk and schremo edge that comes off as raw and boundless. These eclectic tracks are defined by involved guitar riffs, pounding drums, driving bass lines, and emotional vocals. This demo demands attention and instills emotion with a moody edge that is very unique.

-Kevin Conway

THE DISTANCE
YOUR CLOSEST ENEMIES
BRIDGE NINE

I must say that I am impressed. Bridge Nine has a history of putting out quality releases, but The Distance is cut above even the upper-echelon B9 bands. Driving guitars and intense vocals push this CD from its crucial beginning to its brutal end. Aggressive hardcore punk that doesn't follow in the standard formula is such a rarity today that the only drawback to this CD is its staggeringly short running time: six tracks, all under two minutes. That, my friends, is called blue balls.

-FLINT



THE EVAPORATORS
RIPPLE ROCK
ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES RECORDS

Here comes a Canadian band featuring members of The New Pornographers, The Smugglers, and Cub. To put it simply, this CD comes off as second-rate pop-punk. Many of the guitar riffs on this album sound like they could be on any The Queers album(s). If you're into bands such as The Mr. T Experience and The Queers, then The Evaporators will be your new favorite band. Otherwise, this album is, at best, a lackluster of intensity and talent. The band should definitely stay in Canada.

-ADF

THE FEATURES
THE BEGINNING
THE FEATURES

This debut EP from Sparta, TN, band The Features has hard indie-rock bookends in the title track and album closer "The Way It's Meant to Be." The inspiration on these could be some Pere Ubu, but hard indie rock of all flavors is rarely interesting now that so much of it has been produced. The four central tracks are refreshing throwbacks to early '60s pop. The Kinks-influenced "Bumble Bee" and the other bright, retro-pop gems are fun, smile-inducing examples of the legacy of the Elephant 6 collective sound.

-Tom Tearaway Schulte

www.thefeatures.com

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THE FIREBIRD SUITE/ THE FIREBIRD PROJECT ARCHIVES

LUCID RECORDS

This is a re-release of a couple EPs and an LP recorded pre-2000 by seasoned vets The Firebird Suite/Project/Band. The individual songs, despite their early release date, carry a freshness that appealed to me straight off the bat. The vocal tracks are sometimes spoken aggressively, giving a vibe much like Modest Mouse's The Stars Are Projectors. On the whole, The Firebird Suite/Project/Band is very reminiscent of Modest Mouse, often reminding the listener of THE MOON AND ANTARCTICA. Considering the period in which the tracks from ARCHIVES were recorded, this is not surprising. The tracks are very obviously eight-track recordings, recorded at intervals on the road. At any rate, ARCHIVES is worth a listen yet it leaves something to be desired.

-AC Lerok



THE FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS

S/T

CRIMINAL IQ RECORDS

Listening to The Functional Blackouts makes up for the fact that I wasn't old enough to enjoy the punk movement in the late 70s. This self-titled masterpiece makes me proud of Midwest punk. Because of bands like The Functional Blackouts and Clone Defects, there is hope for music. Within this full-length from these Chicagoland punks, you'll get tons of attitude, tons of treble, tons of noise, and tons of inventive music. Instead of ripping off a genre or era and calling themselves throwbacks, the guys in The Functional Blackouts have effectively created an album that will soon be a classic in its own right. If given the right exposure, this album could become very influential to other bands.

-Dane Jackson



THE GOOD LIFE

LOVERS NEED LAWYERS

SADDLE CREEK

Almost everyone has heard of the indie-rock powerhouse Cursive, but have you heard of Cursive's frontman's just-as-impressive side project, The Good Life? If not, here's your chance to score scene points. Started as an outlet for the un-Cursive songs written by Kasher, The Good Life quickly established its own solid sound. The new EP, LOVERS NEED LAWYERS (due out May 18), is a precursor to the full-length expected in late summer of 2004. Just about the only resemblance to Cursive evident on the EP is Kasher's recognizable voice. Some synthetic elements are also present, with heavy use of keys with an organ-like sound. With themes like alcohol and divorce, the general feel of the EP is disillusioned, combining these cynical themes with poppy tunes. It is a must-have for any indie-rock aficionado. www.saddlecreek.com

-tChow



THE GOONS

NATION IN DISTRESS

REPTILIAN RECORDS

With NATION IN DISTRESS, The Goons effectively capture the spirit of bands like Dead Kennedys and the Danzig-led Misfits. Hell, even resembles Jello and Glenn a tad. Don't let the comparisons to DK and Misfits confuse you. The Goons take the essence and spirit of the bands from that era and add better production value. With this album, nothing's sacred. Serge Goon touches on everything from American excess to war and politics. If you like listening to quality punk rock that has more to do with content and passion than image, then NATION IN DISTRESS needs to find a place in your collection. These guys haven't been around since 1994 out of luck. They're great, and this Drew Mazurek-produced album furthers the band's greatness.

-Dane Jackson



THE HONORARY TITLE
ANYTHING ELSE BUT THE TRUTH

DOGHOUSE

Somewhere in between Chris Carrabba's poppy love songs and Rocky Votolato's raw candidness exists Jarrod Gorbel's gentle honesty. Gorbel plays acoustic guitar and various other instruments under the moniker of The Honorary Title, and his first full-length on his new home Doghouse is entitled ANYTHING ELSE BUT THE TRUTH. The first track, Frame by Frame, was well-chosen, as it appropriately sets the tone for the entire release with its warm ambience, its unassuming lyrics, and Gorbel's unforced, genial vocals. Gorbel uses both acoustic and electric guitar as the foundation for all of his songs, but there is also an evident proficiency on various other instruments, such as drums that ably sustain the simple beats, occasional piano parts that perfectly complement the melodies, and strong bass that adds a certain attitude to each song. But the spotlight is on Gorbel's voice, which remains constantly simple and strong throughout each track and is capable of amazing feats. www.thehonorarytitle.com

-tChow



THE HURT PROCESS
DRIVE BY MONOLOGUE

VICTORY

Ever since Thursday left the label and Taking Back Sunday have endured internal strife, Victory Records have been searching for the next huge crossover success. The Hurt Process, a sextet hailing from the U.K., may just be that band, as DRIVE BY MONOLOGUE, the outfit's debut, 10-track offering, combines the sounds of today with the fresh musical perspective that allows this group to fit on any bill. While a twin vocal assault (one clean and one screamo) coupled with the dynamics of emo employed on tracks such as "This Piece" may on paper seem trite, when brought to life, the vigor displayed on "Opinion" and "Last Goodbye" proves that these guys are the real deal. A supercharged melodic ride that fans of anything on the Warped Tour will surely embrace, The Hurt Process should be a band you'll be hearing more from in the future.

-Mike SOS



THE JOHN STAMOS PROJECT
NORTH AMERICAN ALL-STARS

KNOCK KNOCK RECORDS

With a Ramones T-shirt, a pair of Chuck Taylors, and Operation Ivy, Green Day, and CALVIN AND HOBBES stickers all on the cover, The John Stamos Project can be judged by their cover. NORTH AMERICAN ALL-STARS has the dumb-ass Ramones impression down to a T, and the less-than-inspired (or distinctive) lyrics take the concentration more towards dumb-ass than The Ramones. Good guitar undertones separate them from the class, but Sum 41 are still the cream of the Can-Am punk kid movement. Remember to blame Canada when you finish vomiting.

-Rob Macy

close-minded people are morons.



THE JUDAS CRADLE
TOO BAD THEY'RE ALL DEAD
EULOGY RECORDINGS

This album is just like a roller coaster. There are times when it just kicks ass, then there are those other times when it takes a serious dip and makes you want to piss in your pants. You might think you have heard some hard shit in the past with bands like Cannibal Corpse or Death, but none of them could even come close to these guys. It's a five-piece band with nothing but mind-ripping lyrics and guitar solos to match. With influences like Slayer and Iron Maiden, you can here a tinge of the 80s. The first song on the CD starts off with a fun guitar solo, and you think, Okay, this is sweet. Then you bite into the apple and you find the razor blade dipped in LSD. Website is . You should go check them out if you have the chance.

-Ian Wilkins



THE M'S
THE M'S
BRILLIANTE RECORDS

Well, The M's are certainly talented musically, but that doesn't mean they're very good. They just come off as too pretentious for me. They act like they deserve to be famous because they know how to tune their guitars. They are from Chicago, and their singer has Marc Bolan/T. Rex envy. Musically, they sound like top-40 rock. I can't exactly put my finger on why I dislike them so much, but I think it's because this band is probably going to be shoved down our throats on the radio, and I know there'll be no escape from it. It's alright at first, but I never want to hear it again. But I know it's decent enough to get multiple plays, and I won't be able to handle it. Stop them now, before it's too late!

-chad



THE ORPHANS
EVERYBODY LOVES YOU WHEN YOU'RE DEAD
UNITY SQUAD RECORDS

Instead of tracking each instrument separately, you're essentially hearing a live set on *EVERYBODY LOVES YOU WHEN YOU'RE DEAD*. That's not a bad thing, especially in The Orphans' case. After listening to this album, it's clear the band's strong point is their live show. Not only does vocalist Miss Jenny have a captivating and haunting voice, but she leads the band like a ringmaster. Also, recording the album the way this California punk band did makes the experience sound more authentic for the listener and not forced. You can tell by listening to the album that the band genuinely put their best foot forward with this release. Genuine music by genuine people it doesn't get any better than this. Think The Germs with a female singer, and you're a bit close to The Orphans' sound.

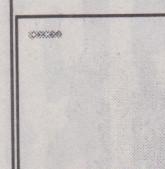
-Dane Jackson



THE ORPHANS
DROWNING CUPID
GOODNIGHT RECORDS

Atlanta natives The Orphans kick out disco/post-punk set to catchy bubblegum-pop keyboard riffs that'll get you dancing in a hurry and will give fans of Hot Hot Heat, Go Go Go Airheart, or Le Tigre reason to rejoice. The Orphans flirt with many different styles and genres, complete with abstract lyrics, as in the excellent new wave-ish Chinese Prom. Other highlights include Camp Cryotop and Monochrome. So get off your ass and find out for yourself: mp3s at goodnightrecords.com.

-Jude Ruiz



THE PIECES
S/T
BENCHMARK RECORDS

About a quarter way through the opening track That's Why It Is, my brain started churning over this band The Pieces. Their recognizable sound was reaching back to the library of my musical knowledge that was just old enough to still be filed with care catalogs. I check the years 1989-93 under Boston indie pop, and I pull out the references of The Lemheads, Blake Babies, Antenna, etc. Taking a glance over the one sheet, I was not surprised to read that two-thirds of the band had some kind of incestuous tie to the above-referenced bands. The Pieces S/T release stands on its own against the albums that blazed the trail over 10 years ago, but I often find myself questioning if my acceptance of this band is merely just a side-effect of my nostalgia for a sound I loved dearly in my college years.

-Wally P.



THE PLOT TO BLOW UP THE EIFFEL TOWER
IF YOU CUT US, WE BLEED
HCNL

And just when I thought I couldn't handle another punk/hardcore experimental band, The Plot to Blow Up the Eiffel Tower came my way. If anyone is familiar with the artists remotely related to the Three One G label (known for their predominantly grindcore lineups), these kids fall right into that category. It's a cross between The Locust, Blood Brothers, and their own influential breed of punk mayhem. But they differentiate themselves from this crowd by intertwining a more intense approach musically and vocally. Rather than screaming, high-pitched vocals and pounding,

scratches, guitar, The Plot to Blow Up the Eiffel Tower provide a sufficient edge of audio havoc. Oddly enough, there is a jazz-related sequence that flows through this three-track EP. It's definitely not a new sound but then again, what is these days? The only thing I can conjure up is that they would put on one hell of a live show.

-Courtney Riot



THE SPITS
ZZZ
DIRTNAP

Homemade costumes, cheesy keyboard overlays, and Misfits-esque bashes are just some of the many tricks up this trio known as The Spits sleeves and man, do they have an arsenal. Imagine The Ramones, Devo, The Misfits, and the neighbor's kid's band jamming out in a frenetic, robotic, and always subhuman way, and you've got the essence of this nine-track punk-rawk funfest, complete with sing-along choruses (like the one found in Nuclear Bomb) and driving riffs that will make the floor shake like it's 1979 on tracks like Don't Shoot. Injecting some of the unpredictability and silliness that punk rock has lacked lately, The Spits are a whole lot of fun and, if nothing else, a great escape.

-Mike SOS



THE SPOOKY KIDS
LUNCH BOXES AND CHOKLIT COWS
UNIVERSAL

Ever wondered what Marilyn Manson sounded like in the early days? Well, thanks to a won lawsuit, all of you freaks out there no longer have to endure the drama, as former member Daisy Berkowitz (a.k.a. Scott Putesky), guitarist and producer, has cleaned up the aforementioned tracks in question and released the sought-after music under the band's initial moniker, The Spooky Kids. The result, the curious crowd inquires? Basically, what you'd expect a foundational Manson record to sound like. Touches of glam metal collide with slabs of industrial, as all of the weirdness (both musically and lyrically) you'd expect from a derivative of what now is known as Marilyn Manson remains intact. Despite what the press junket says, there's a whole lotta grunge going down here, too, which, when crossed with the dashes of goth rock swirling about, make The Spooky Kids an interesting listen for Manson fans that want a little taste of history.

-Mike SOS



THE VINDICTIVES
UNPLUGGED
TEAT PRODUCTIONS

This beautiful acoustic album from veteran Illinois punks The Vindictives really shows how age and experience do wonders. Nine musicians worked together for three consecutive weekends to cover 10 originals from the band's 14-year career and four classic cover tunes for this disc. The songs are done softly, in an emotional vein that leaves a chill on the speakers. The addition of a pan flute, chimes, xylophone, and violin give this music a dream-like feel, like sinking in a dark lake. The covers, from Sinatra to Rodgers and Hammerstein, are enough to make this album worthwhile, but the re-recording of the band's past tunes in a new vein put this one over the top.

-DUG



THE WILLOWZ
THE WILLOWZ
DIODYSUS RECORDS

The Willowz has the cools. The trio is featured in the ultra hip flick *ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND*, and they just completed working on a video with super cool Michel Gondry. This self-titled debut sounds like garage gone geeky cool. Axemen and vocalist Richie James sings like a cross between The B-52's Fred Schneider III and T Bone Burnett. His style is happenstance artiness, which is the style of the band. Jessica Reynoza (bass and vocals) is just doing all of the right things. Her input as a singer is minimal, and Kim Dill cool. The Willowz is the newest product of the school of The Velvet Underground. I love the songs Meet Your Demise, Something, and Keep on Looking only slightly more than I love all the rest. THE WILLOWZ very cool.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



THE YOUTH CLASS
THIS IS WHAT I REMEMBER
SELF-RELEASED

Unsure of what to expect from a Midwest band inspired by Modest Mouse and Nirvana, I popped the CD in and let them give it to me. What I got was a heavy amount of talented instrumentalists and a medium dosage of vocals belting out troubled lyrics. The influences behind The Youth Class are apparent through the range of styles scattered about their tracks. With Cobain-like screams in the second track, Something Foreign, and their indie side shining through on tracks like Kelly Warner, The Youth Class offers the listener a wide range of sounds to pick and choose from. The sound is fresh. While they are definitely talented, the music is raw and definitely has room for growth.

-Carley Charpentier



wannabe reviewer: tChow

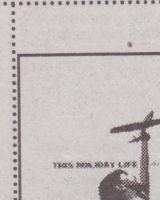
NEVER SAY: You can't do something.
WHAT I LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN REVIEWING A CD: honestly? Getting free CDs.
THIS MONTH I WILL NOT: Forget to exercise, spend without saving.



THE PLOT TO BLOW UP THE EIFFEL TOWER
IF YOU CUT US, WE BLEED
HCNL

This Holiday Life are from San Diego, and they're awful. They sound like U2 and Switchfoot and Coldplay just the worst of the worst. I was at the dentist, and he was going to pull some of my rotten teeth out, and he was like, I'm gonna inject some novocaine now. But since I have a fear of needles, I was like, Can you just play this record instead? And he was like, Okay. So my brain was just as numbed as a syringe full of novocaine by listening to this. But now looking back, I think I would have been better off facing my fears than putting myself through the terrible torture this band is capable of forcing on one's ears. Avoid them at all costs!

-chad



THIS HOLIDAY LIFE
THE FALLOUT
DARETODREAM RECORDS

This Holiday Life are from San Diego, and they're awful. They sound like U2 and Switchfoot and Coldplay just the worst of the worst. I was at the dentist, and he was going to pull some of my rotten teeth out, and he was like, I'm gonna inject some novocaine now. But since I have a fear of needles, I was like, Can you just play this record instead? And he was like, Okay. So my brain was just as numbed as a syringe full of novocaine by listening to this. But now looking back, I think I would have been better off facing my fears than putting myself through the terrible torture this band is capable of forcing on one's ears. Avoid them at all costs!

-chad

i wrote better lyrics in third grade.

Tiki DeVille

TIKI DEVILLE

100% FUNCTIONAL

DEMO

Tiki DeVille are a three-piece from Los Angeles formerly known as Uncle Tiki. They describe themselves as a "psycho voodoo rockin' roll jam band." The vocals sound like a low-pitched growl with forceful guitar and drum to back up their persona. They sing about evil, whiskey, gin, and heartache. The vocals are strong and embody the noise of evil (and there's a song title, "Prime Evil," too). At times the band and the vocals sound like Metallica and Misfits. Interestingly, they cover Misfits' "Skulls." The cover begins poorly, sounding like bad karaoke, but it soon progresses as the vocals take charge and do the song justice.

-Jennifer Moncayo



TINER, PHILLIPS, SCHOENBECK TRIO

BREATHE IN, FEED OUT

PFMENTUM

This is a challenging listen...and, frankly, one that I just don't understand. The trio Kris Tiner (trumpet, flugelhorn, piccolo trumpet, reeds), Noah Phillips (guitar, electronics), Sara Schoenbeck (bassoon) plays contemporary jazz that, to me, actually sounds rather dated. Growing up in the late 70s, I remember watching bad science-fiction movies on television, and the weird music that was meant to be both mysterious and frightening in those movies sounded an awful lot like the music that this trio creates. At times the trio seems to be playing the same song, while at other

times it sounds like each member recorded their part at a different time without hearing what their partners had done first. Why somebody chose to send this record to SKRATCH is beyond me, as I can't imagine very many readers would be hip enough to even give this a try.

-Chip Midnight



TRAUMA

SOLIDARITY

STRIKEFIRST RECORDS

This CD was more of an experience than anything else. The beats are fast and kept my head spinning. Surely the screams express a deep-felt trauma of growing up in Riverside, CA, but other than that, there was no real reason for me to come back for more. Don't get me wrong; these guys have talent, and I would recommend that screamo fans check them out...but the appeal for me isn't there. The creativity on the track titles is impeccable. "Birds Have Wings and So Do Angels" must have taken a toll on the brain to come up with. Perhaps it's the dizzy, spinning feeling I get from the sound, but Trauma left me with nothing but that: trauma.

-Carley Charpentier



TWENTY YEAR FIX

AUDIO NOVOCAIN

INVAUDIO

Have I heard this somewhere before? Maybe the term "pop-punk" says it best. The songs remind me of being healthy and carefree, doing jumping jacks in a sunny field while wearing a bright blue sweatshirt with something clever written across the behind. The thing is, I am wearing a spiked bracelet. This San Diego trio lays down an offering of 10 tracks that would provide a suitable soundtrack for some pre-college, house-party drama or a future movie like CAN'T HARDLY WAIT 6 or some other teeny bopper/growing up is hard/feel-good hybrid. Twenty Year Fix is a band on the rise, not designed to twist your morals and ideals, but rather to get your foot tapping, pelvis thrusting, and your arm around the cute blonde sitting next to you. I didn't find it terribly repetitive, but then again, I wouldn't go ahead and give it a league of its own status, either. It is just good.

-Thomas Murray



UGLY BUZZARD

UGLY BUZZARD

UGLY BUZZARD MUSIC

I think this band redefines the meaning of being lame. They look like backyard wrestlers. One has long, straight hair covering his face; one has this menacing mustache and stocking cap; and the third has a bad three-piece suit, with the top button undone just enough to let his chest hair stick out. Their image is brilliant! They're even wearing Looney Toons T-shirts during their concerts, which is priceless! I don't think they realize how big of goons they are! Their bio repeats over and over how much mainstream commercial potential they think they have. This means: If you're not above sucking your ass if you give them the time of day. Well what else can I say? Oh, yeah, their music: it sucks! Motley Crue meets Ted Nugent in the wrestling ring.

-chad



UNHOLY GHOST

TORRENTIAL REIGN

OLYMPIC

Unholy Ghost did a lot of things with this album...but one thing they failed to do was impress me. The riffs may be very powerful, but we've all heard them before on other death-metal albums. I won't deny the fact that the band has talent, especially in the department of speedy playing, but perhaps they should have taken a month longer in the songwriting process to add a few unique touches to the album rather than keeping with the normal death-metal clichés. I do enjoy the production of guitarist Jerry Mortellaro's solos, however, even though the clean and swirling sound they showcase are contrasting to the recording quality of the rest of the songs. www.olympicrecordings.com

-Zac



VARIOUS ARTISTS

2004 SAMPLER

OLYMPIC RECORDS

Here we have a comp from one of the leading Cookie Monster metal labels. 13 tracks of incoherent screams, disjointed double-bass drum percussion, and really bad guitar solos. Of the 13 bands showcased here, not one is distinguishable from the next. I've always wondered A) who makes this triple, and B) who in God's name likes it? I mean, the fact that Jungle Rot has been around for at least five years is a little disheartening, because that means that someone is actually BUYING their records. This is a harsh reality for me.

-FLINT



VARIOUS ARTISTS

BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES

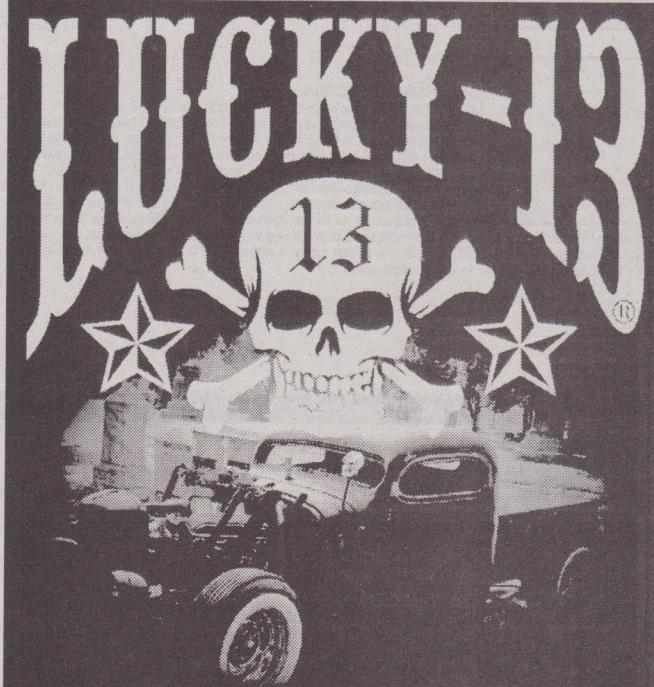
LAW OF INERTIA

I suppose it was only a matter of time before some genius came up with the idea of having a bunch of hardcore bands cover Guns N' Roses' songs and then compile them on a disc together. The result, however, was a few bars below what I had hoped for. The songs turned out to be more humorous rather than good covers, despite the bands' original intentions. However, I will say that Dillinger Escape Plan's version of "My Michelle" is just about the best thing I've ever heard. Time in Malta's rendition of "November Rain" isn't too shabby, either. I won't push you to buy this, unless you need one more thing to add to your GNR collection. But the Dillinger cover alone might be worth it.

-Zac

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VARIOUS ARTISTS
EENIE MEENIE RECORDS SAMPLER VOL. 003

EENIE MEENIE RECORDS
This L.A.-based indie-rock label delivers yet another intriguing compilation that features two songs apiece from nine bands. Irving shines on the ultra-catchy "I Can't Fall in Love." From Bubblegum to Sky applies a Japanese pop aesthetic on "Sign the Air." If High Water Marks come across as Apples in Stereo's sister on "Good I Feel Bad," that's because this band features Hilarie Sidney (of Apples in Stereo), as well as members of Preston School of Industry, Palermo, and Von Hemming. The disc also features tunes from The Faraway Places, Pine'AM, Seksu

Roba, Blue Eyed Son, Gravity & Henry, and Dj Me Dj You. Check eeniemeenie.com for some ass kicking mp3s.

-Jude Ruiz



VARIOUS ARTISTS
HIGH VOLUME: THE STONER ROCK COLLECTION

HIGH TIMES RECORDS
This compilation was put together by Bobby Black, who works for both HIGH TIMES magazine and the record label with the same name. And this certainly isn't your mom's stoner-rock music. The Beatles and The Grateful Dead won't be found here. In fact, no one you recognize will be found here! This compilation is 14 tracks of groups I don't think I've ever heard of before. The one group I did recognize was Corrosion of Conformity and they're certainly not a good enough reason to pick this up. In fact, if the rest of the album wasn't so bad, I'd say avoid it.

because of them alone! All the groups here are in the heavy-metal genre, it seems. If anything, this album is just a novelty to impress your stoner friends. See, dude, now I can read HIGH TIMES while listening to HIGH TIMES while getting high! Wow! Awesome, man! But if you really wanted to impress your friends, you'd buy an album that actually rocked and didn't suck.

-chad

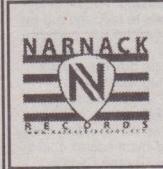


VARIOUS ARTISTS
LOCATION IS EVERYTHING, VOL. 2

JADE TREE RECORDS
As Jade Tree approaches its 15th birthday, we find them releasing a new sampler highlighting all that the label has to offer. Granted, Jade Tree's roster has seen some stronger incarnations over the years, but one thing always remains the same: Jade Tree has always been able to vary their lineup just enough to avoid being pegged into any sort of discernible style or trend. While everything in these 21 tracks falls underneath the increasingly meaningless punk moniker, few labels can boast the diversity of everything from the bubblegum rap of Cex to the chaos of From Ashes

Rise. And if all this diversity doesn't strike you, the double dose of David Bazan should put you over the edge. Not only is there an unreleased demo version of "I do" from Pedro the Lion's forthcoming ACHILLES HEEL, also included is a remarkably dead-on cover of "Rapture" by Jonah and his Oneliners.

-Matt Sibley



VARIOUS ARTISTS
NARNACK RECORDS SAMPLER #2

NARNACK RECORDS
This is an excellent way to explore the Narnack catalog. The sampler begins and ends with the heavy garage sound of Coachwhips (very reminiscent of Dan Melchior). The track from D.J. Shitbird & the Ultimate Party Machine is lo-fi techno that could have been lifted from Quinton's ARE YOU READY FOR AN ORGAN SOLO? The loose, noisy instrumental jam from Hella also stands out. Revenge has two demo versions here of lo-fi, noisy electronica-rock with vocals, but the arrangements are insubstantial and the recording quality low. These tracks fade from the

mind very fast. Part & Labor has a good, fast-paced instrumental track ready for highway driving in Good Morning Black Eye. Any decent sampler offers pleasant discoveries, and the cool thing to find here is Langhorne Slim. The damaged country rock has the loony charm of Daniel Johnston without the formulaic failures of Jandek.

-Tom Tearaway Schulte



VARIOUS ARTISTS
NEO JAPAN SERIES: NEO SOUL

TOFU RECORDS
If LOST IN TRANSLATION taught anything, it's that the Japanese have a distinct concept of what is cool. That, and they love Americans. So, while Hello Kitty and karaoke haven't quite made the trek across the Pacific, our crappy disposable R&B has. The NEO SOUL sampler displays some painful to listen to material, but the hilarious bilingual soul jams are perfect for working your way to a happy ending with that special someone apparently. Perhaps now is a good time to reevaluate the concept of the ugly American now that a once vital, respectable, and proud people have been turned on to R. Kelly.

-Rob Macy



VARIOUS ARTISTS
RISE UP HARDCORE 03

FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE
Aside from the lame, melodic, out-of-place pop of Last of the Famous, RISE UP is a more than decent comp with some impressive under-the-radar hardcore bands from all over the country that are worthy of attention. Some of the standout offerings (in no particular order) include the opening scorching Indestructible from Never Surrender and the following track, Coalition's angry tirade against poseurs You'll Never Know. Face the Enemy offer a good one, Third Degree, which ends with a slam-inducing breakdown, while Deathstar's Die to Remain has real shoddy production but is tough as hell (probably the toughest, meanest, gnarliest of the 18 tracks (and that's saying a lot). The ferocious I've Had It from RNR and Comeback Kid's Lorelei are both stellar, and Where Eagles Dare rip it up with Good Times, an awesome (if mateurish) finale with sing-along choruses. Overall, an extremely satisfying comp.

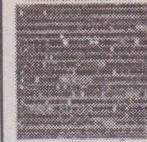
-Janelle Jones



VARIOUS ARTISTS
SHITE N ONIONS VOLUME 1

OMNIUM
Oh, bloody hell! This is NOT the comp you wanna hear if you have an irrational fear of Irish folk-infused punk like me. Thus, I cannot be unbiased when reviewing this EXCRUCIATINGLY long (22-track, 65-minute) record. My mind started reeling, and hallucinations and epileptic fits seemed to be on the horizon. However, I looked within for strength and listened to the album in its entirety. The outcome? Only Neck's The Star of the County Down managed to pique some interest, but perhaps that's because it's the Busta Hollywood Mix (I don't know, either!) and wasn't very folksy. All respect to Shane MacGowan and The Pogues, but this is rough. Now, if you LIKE this stuff, it's a wonderful comp, and don't listen to me, cause I know naught about what makes a good Celtic-punk song...and, as narrow-minded as this sounds, I intend on keeping it that way.

-Janelle Jones



VARIOUS ARTISTS
SOUNDTRACKS FOR KISSES, TRIPS, AND HITS: A FUTURE APPLE-TREE COMPILATION

FUTURE APPLETREE
When I was young, I was a big fan of compilations where I got the chance to hear new music from bands that I might not be aware of, but this particular one did not incite my ignorant interest. I got incredibly bored listening to Future Appletree's artists, The Marlboro Chorus, Tenki, Driver of the Year, The Vow, Roman Castles, Seth Knappen, and Crash. Much of the music on the label reminded me of Beck, whom I recognize as a good artist but don't pursue listening to. I fell asleep to this compilation, which makes me glad that I stopped buying comps long ago and that I didn't gamble and purchase this one. Oh, and the dang album cover is in indecipherable cursive, making it difficult to know what I'm listening to.

-Luke Skywalker



VARIOUS ARTISTS
SPIN THE BOTTLE: A TRIBUTE TO KISS

KOCH RECORDS
This KISS tribute album features an assortment of rock-band gurus such as Dee Snider from Twisted Sister, Tommy Shaw of Styx, and Lemmy Kilmeister of Motorhead singing and playing KISS songs. Each KISS cover has its own style and spin on a classic song, which adds another level or dimension to a song that you may have heard a million times before. If you enjoy KISS and find the idea of other rockers whom you may also adore rocking out to KISS, you may find this album quite the treasure.

-Jennifer Moncayo



VARIOUS ARTISTS
SUMOSONIC 22
DIESEL-U-MUSIC

How can you deny an effort with the slogan, It might blow up, but it won't go pop? It will be very hard to, as Italian fashion company Diesel releases this compilation of a variety of up-and-coming hip-hop, rock, and electronic artists. Diesel decided to put together a board of industry insiders to head up Diesel-U-Music, a showcase for breakthrough talent. For their 2004 series, artists such as The Postal Service, The Shins, Moving Units, Automato, Ambulance, and countless others take part in this unique opportunity to gain substantial recognition in the fiercely competitive music world. This particular release features songs from DNTEL, The Fiery Furnaces, and Prefuse 73, in addition to a remix of Such Great Heights, by The Postal Service. It's a truly energetic and impressive compilation of innovative talent.

-lChow



VARIOUS ARTISTS
S/T

WHITEROOM RECORDS
If you're staunchly convinced that quirky electro-pop is the hottest shit since instant oatmeal, good grief, does Florida's WhiteRoom Records have some goodies for you. Here, four artistic collectives are coaxed onto the main stage with nary more than a carrot and a glowstick, and they answer to the titles of Scott Marino, Cursau, Arthur's Chair, and Beeps and Tones. Judging by the 13 servings of timidly pulsating electronic sound salad that are dished out on this inaugural album, the heat is starting to break in the Sunshine State and it is slowly and furiously affecting the local food and water supply. In plain English, it is causing folks the feel an irrepressible urge to scratch the old funk itch. Although the under-the-table ambience of Cursau is best classified as modern new wave, the glitch-infected art of the majority this compilation's other contributors is buoyant and crotchetty. Noodley no-wave meets new wave in a drug-induced coma.

-Dave Kargol



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE FIRST COMPILATION

BLUNTFACE RECORDS
For being a compilation, the music mix is not cohesive in the slightest. The only consistency is that all the music is a disappointment. This music really does nothing for me, besides perhaps giving me the migraine I acquire by the end of the day. Luckily for me and the rest of the listeners out there, Blunface threw in a few rocking tracks. Track 5, Fountain by Skintrance, was a sort of eclectic, new-wave rock song, which freshened up the hardcore mix. Another somewhat different yet refreshing sound came from Teloussekai, a Coheed and Cambria knock-off. The CD begins with hardcore tracks from Senseless Mutation and slowly merges into synthesized hard-rock dishes from bands like Evil Sex Party. Blunface may have worked in a decent song or two in the mix, but all in all, we can only hope THE FIRST COMPILATION is the last.

-Carley Charpentier



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THE NECESSARY EFFECT: SCREAMERS SONGS INTERPRETED BY EXTRAVERTIGO

Talk about underground. Imagine releasing a tribute album for a band that never even released an album. Seems a bit strange, no? Well, The Screamers are that kind of genre-breaking outfit, and THE NECESSARY EFFECT is the album that pays homage to the seminal pre-1980s Los Angeles (by way of Seattle) underground cult crew. This 29-track release contains bands that, like The Screamers, are far from household names—and that's the way it should be. After all, chances are that if you heard of this band or even were into this band, you probably wouldn't appreciate bands like Sum 41 covering one of its tracks. Noisy, disjointed, and very left of center (many of the bands and solo artists paying respect don't even use a guitar—much like The Screamers), The Screamers are an acquired taste; but if you enjoy music that is artsy, dissonant, and way underground, check this twin-disc collection out. www.extravertigo.com

-Mike SOS



VARIOUS ARTISTS
THIS IS HOW I KILL MY TEARS

DEEP ELM RECORDS
I always complain about how hard it is to find quality indie rock, but ironically enough, I found it in my mailbox this month. THIS IS HOW I KILL MY TEARS is one of many compilation discs released from Deep Elm Records. Boasting such bands as Sounds Like Violence, Desert City Soundtrack, and Burns Out Bright, Deep Elm prides themselves in providing and promoting quality independent recordings. I would have to agree: these tracks are fabulous. With each band providing two tracks for the compilation, the listener gets a good sense of what to expect from Deep Elm Records. Ranging from indie/garage rock to screamo-emo, the bands exhibited on THIS IS HOW I KILL MY TEARS have found a place in my heart and my CD collection.

-Carley Charpentier

good music makes me all giggly gay.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
THIS IS YOUR ESTABLISHMENT
LORELEI RECORDS

While this comp may not get as much exposure as ROCK AGAINST BUSH, Lorelei Records hopes to usher in some social change of their own with THIS IS YOUR ESTABLISHMENT. The proceeds of this comp go to the Center for Constitutional Rights to aid their efforts in advancing the rights given to us by the Constitution. Overall, the list of bands is an impressive one. The comp uses big names like Yellowcard, Good Riddance, and Glasseater to draw people in. Then, after listening to the heavy hitters, you're treated to acts like Schatzl, Dynamite Boy, and Slick Shoes. Overall, this is a decent comp, but since it's for a great cause, I recommend it.

-Dane Jackson



VICE DOLLS
DIE TRYING
CROSSCHECK RECORDS

About three tracks into this record, I felt like vomiting—not from the constant death imagery or the nailed-down bloody body used for cover art, but rather from the terrible noises coming from my headphones. Instead of screaming, or even singing, the female singer, just kind of shouts the lyrics, which are laden with constant references to death and growing up. The cadence of the female vocalist never changes, similar to the constant overuse of the guitarist's overdrive. Everything runs together, making my stomach knot up from pure nausea. By the musical trifecta that was American Dream, Modern Guns, and Killing Words, I was ready to boot.

-AC Lerok



WALLS OF JERICHO
ALL HAIL THE DEAD
TRUSTKILL

Power-driven. The core of all cores. They rip out all the tired stereotypes of hardcore, metalcore, grindcore, thrashcore, and incorporate only the best in this third album of theirs. If you're even thinking about scenesters with jet-black hair pasted down on halfway across their face, get it out of your head. In fact, you'll have no problem doing so with songs such as Fixing Broken Hearts, where the spasms of the riffs correspond perfectly with the vocal jerks of lead singer Candace Kusculian and will leave you either shaking your head in disbelief or banging your head.

-Mabel Lam



WASP
THE NEON GOD
SANCTUARY

WASP has always been known to push the boundaries of metal ever since Blackie Lawless burst on the scene and raised the ire of the PMRC. Conversely, the band has yearned to be on the course to create a grandiose offering that stood alongside such works as TOMMY by The Who (a big influence of Lawless). On the band's latest release, the conceptual THE NEON GOD PART I, Blackie and company aim to fulfill both destinies, as the 14-track record explores one young man's journey through loneliness and despair, as he experiences firsthand inhumane abuse, the hypocrisy of religion, the power that sex and drugs wield, the spirit of redemption and its cost, and even go so far as to question the meaning of existence all to the soaring melodies that made WASP's songs so memorable. The storyline behind THE NEON GOD is a bit dramatized for the sake of being theatrical, yet when put to the score which WASP pounds out, it stands up as a potential (albeit very hit) on the Broadway stage. Once again, WASP's body of work, which has garnished everything from praise to disgust, criticism and adulation, will work your brain, seep into your subconscious, and ultimately stick in your brain for years on end. Look for PART II later on this year, but fear not: this release has enough to keep your interest and intrigue at the highest levels possible.

-Mike SOS



WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE
GO TO HELL
UNDERDOGMA RECORDS

The story of We're All Gonna Die is a heartwarming one, with a moral of family and love conquering all that is something that we can all identify with. Taking a cue from such powerhouse brother acts as Nelson and Hanson, brothers Jim and Scott Healey (on vocals/guitar and drums, respectively) formed the band in Boston with their cousin Russ Boudreau on drums. One can only imagine the warm feeling inside that comes from playing music with your own flesh and blood. I'll bet that once a year they all get together at the nu-metal family reunion and do renditions of Yankee Doodle with Sikk Kimmy (age 8) on the clarinet and Uncle Stu playing a mean accordion.

-Casey Clague



WE RAGAZZI
WOLVES WITH PRETTY LIPS
SUICIDE SQUEEZE RECORDS

The third full-length from this sexy Chicago threesome brings more of the same no-wave antics that the kids go crazy for these days—and I mean that in the best way possible. 11 tracks of sexy, groove-heavy punk with an emphasis on the jive, if you catch my meaning. Singer Tony Rolando's powerful pipes conjure up comparisons to such heavy hitters as Billy Corgan and Mick Jagger, but with a confident swagger that is all his own. Highly recommended for those with a little sass in their step. Solid.

-Matt Siblo



WHERE EAGLES DARE
TO COME FROM NOWHERE
NEW DAY RISING RECORDS

TO COME FROM NOWHERE is the follow-up to Where Eagles Dare's debut EP on Endwell Records. Compared to some of the other hardcore bands in the scene, these songs are some of the best songs I've heard, in a while. The guitars incorporate equal parts technicality with melody, which is a feat not many bands can pull off. The vocals are a pretty high-pitched scream that get a little annoying every now and then, but the music helps to make up for it. Look for a West Coast tour with Strike Anywhere soon.

-Joe Wilson



WIGGLE
BRINGING BACK 77
SELF-RELEASED

When it comes to three-chord, anthem-filled punk rock, most of you know what to expect. From the first track on this EP from Southern California trio Wiggle, I was expecting the worst. But, unlike other bands who follow the three-chord punk formula, Wiggle actually has talent. Also, halfway through the EP Wiggle decided to break the three-chord punk mold and show off some of its other talents. Grandma's House, for example, offers up some layered vocal harmonies and intricate guitar work. Wiggle takes the punk formula to new levels with its

-Dane Jackson

EP. Worth a listen for authentic punk fans and fans of pop-punk.



WITHIN Y
EXTENDED MENTAL DIMENSIONS
CANDLELIGHT USA

So this is my introduction to the Gothenburg metal scene, and the latest band out of said scene. With dozens of bands packed onto the Gothenburg metal Website (gothenburgmetal.com), I seem to be a bit behind the times. If they're all as good as Within Y, then I have been missing out. When I think of metal, my thoughts go directly to American bands like Sworn Enemy and Biohazard. I had no idea that the death metal from Sweden had actually progressed past the days of Cannibal Corpse and Obituary. When I think of death metal, I immediately conjure up visions of long-haired goofballs trying to swallow their microphones and pouring fake blood all over themselves in a half-assed attempt to be spooky. Within Y has opened my eyes and showed me that Europeans can make decent music.

-FLINT



YES SENSEI
WE WHO TRANSPLANT, SUSTAIN
ROK LOK RECORDS

Take the funky hardcore of The Minutemen and add some escapist sonority, and you get Yes Sensei (bitchin' name). The personality of WE WHO TRANSPLANT, SUSTAIN can be summed up in the first three tracks titles: Russian or Relarded, Progress is Dead, and Right Shirt, Wrong Band. Very much like The Minutemen. It stands apart. Yes Sensei don't come across like posers, they're just rockin' the funky hardcore. Very well. This album will get a party started with lots and lots of cool-as-hell moments. The jammy aspects come wrapped weirdly, instead of some hippie blues spawning. It has more to do with Pink Floyd and jazz than Phish. Cool weirdo jams.

-H. Barry Zimmerman



YESTERDAYS TOMORROW
SELF TITLED

This four-track demo features emotional rock n roll with driving bass lines and developed tracks. Emotional harmonies are occasionally intercalated with raw screams and cries. Rock n roll is ever-present during the course of the demo, and sporadic instrumental explosions give credibility to the raw power emitted from the tracks. Yesterday's Tomorrow has a traditional emo scheme, with vocal comparisons to Saves the Day. However, the occasional scream and cry set them apart from typical emo bands, yet those are infrequent enough so as not to classify this as schreimo. This demo contains typical indie and emo guitar riffs with emotional vocals. This band is far from unique, but far from untalented. The tracks are well-developed with driving, intricate instrumentals and a truly emotional set of vocals. Overall, this is a talented but typical emotional rock band.

-Kevin Conway



ZILLATRON
LORD OF THE HARVEST
INNERHYTHMIC

When I first picked up this ultra-funky sound orgy featuring 70s bass legend Bootsy Collins, I couldn't seem find enough hands to help me rub my eyes and ears in disbelief. You see, referring to this psychedelic audio trip as funky is not much unlike calling Noam Chomsky smart (i.e., it's a rabid understatement). A 20-something suburban white boy like myself may not typically know peas from carrots when dealing with the art of funk, however, my babies, I do know it when I hear it. Zillatron also features guitar-solo wizard and all-around enigma Buckethead, as well as Umar Bin Hassan, who, as a member of The Last Poets, has been credited as the founding father of hip-hop. Spooky, alien-like narration, swirling electro-jams, and slinky bass madness all chip in to actualize LORD OF THE HARVEST as funky and colorful enough to make George Clinton blush and throw in the towel.

-Dave Kargol



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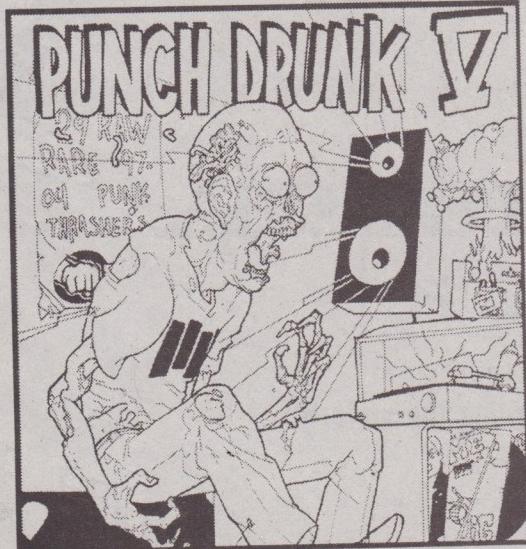


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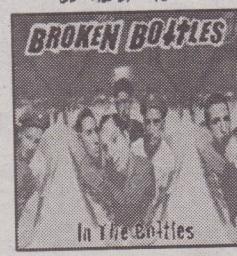
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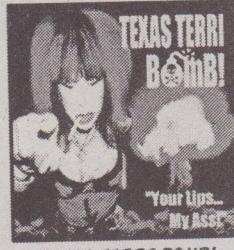
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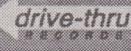
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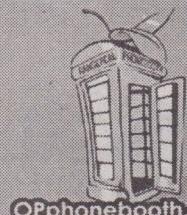
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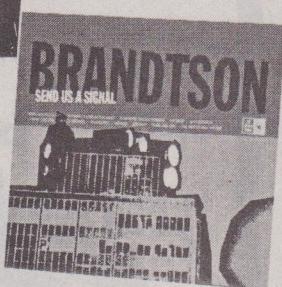
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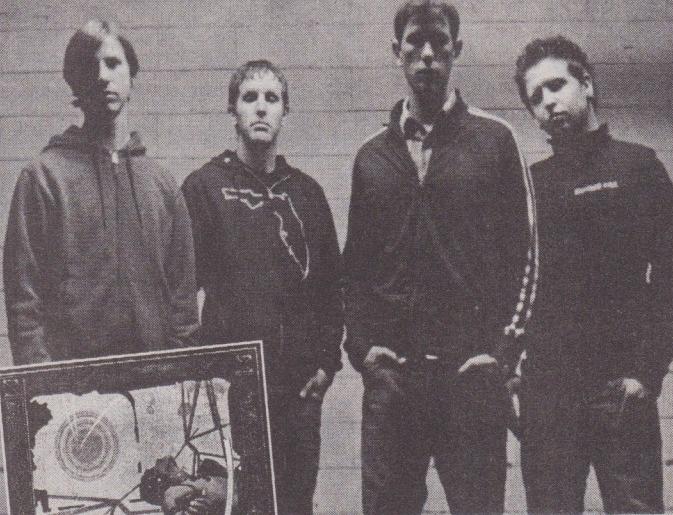
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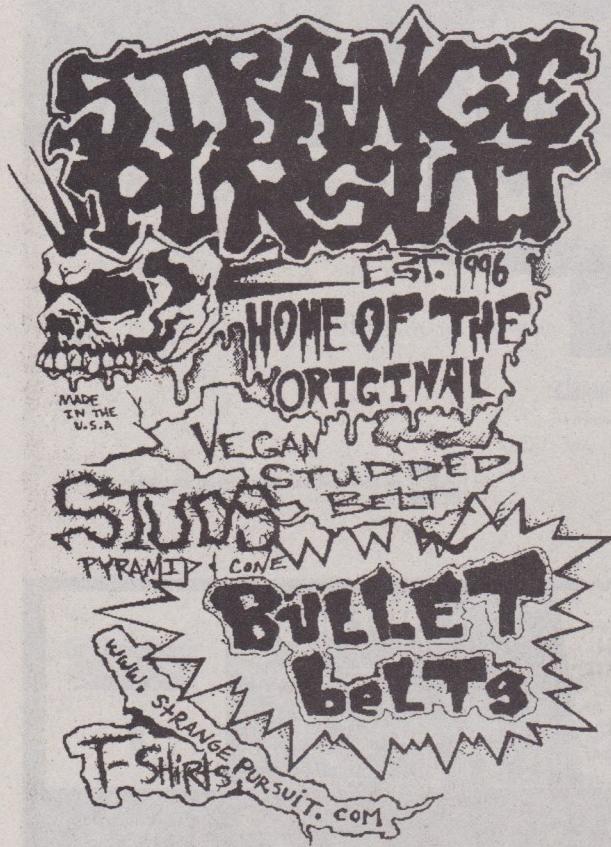
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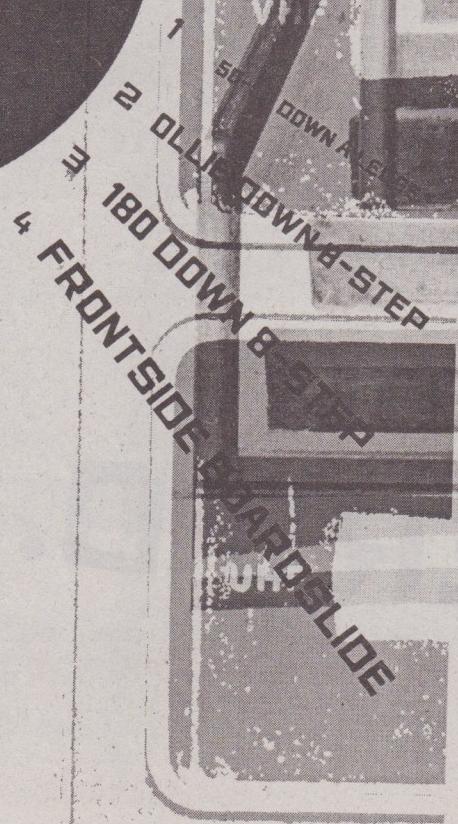
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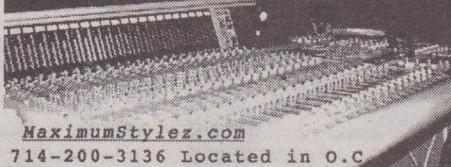
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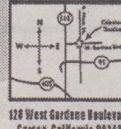
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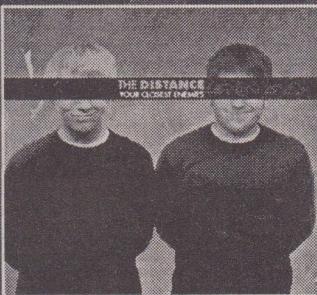
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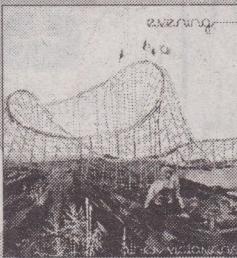
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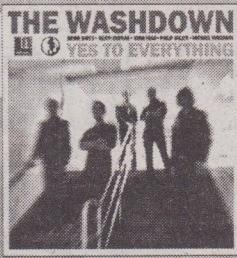
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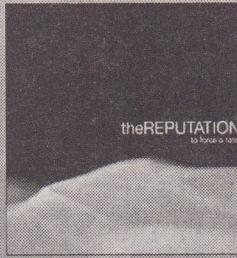
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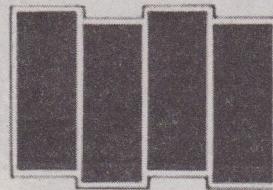
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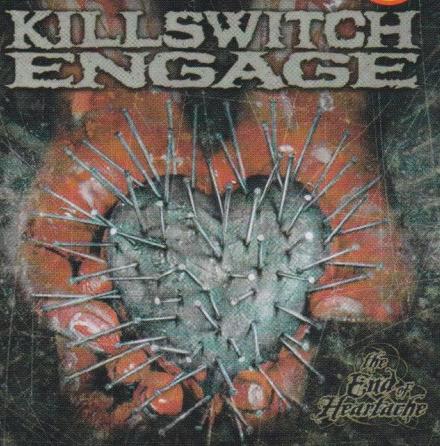
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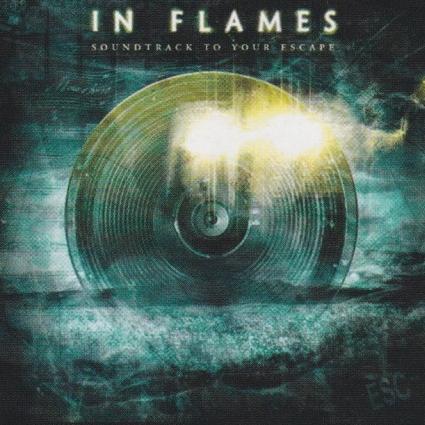
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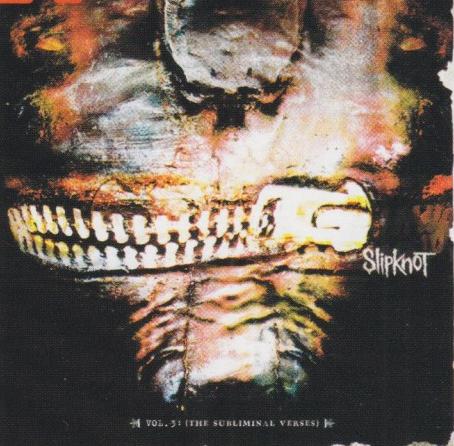
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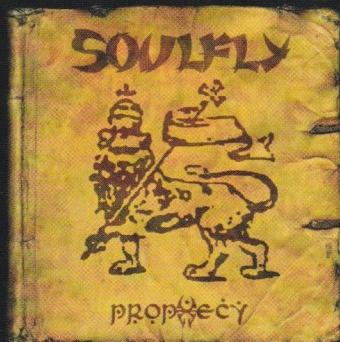
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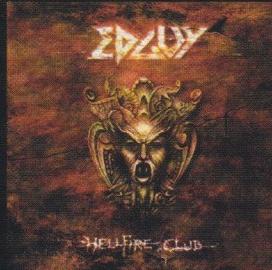
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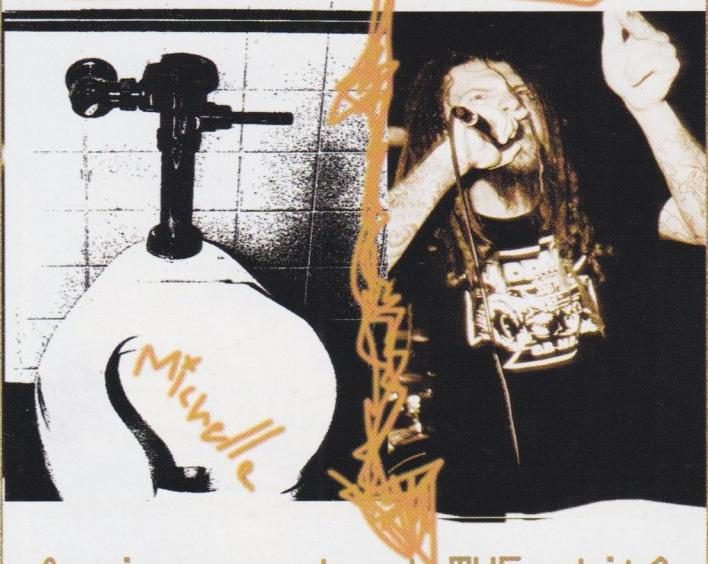
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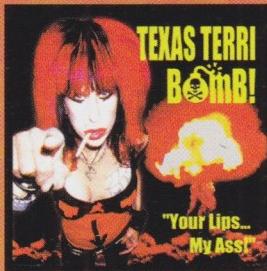
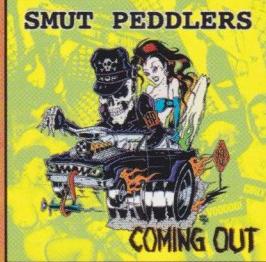


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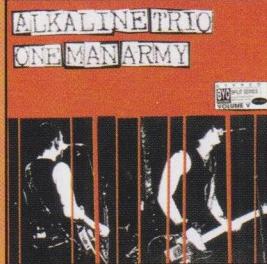
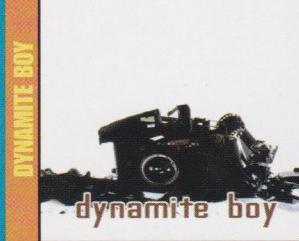
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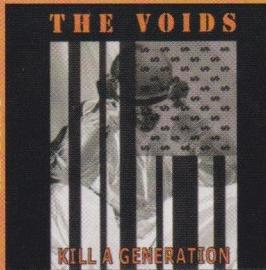
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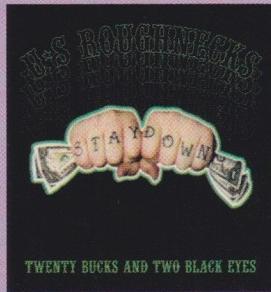
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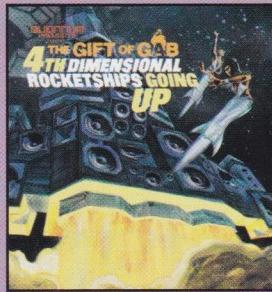


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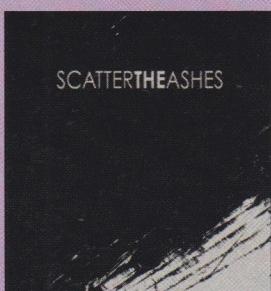
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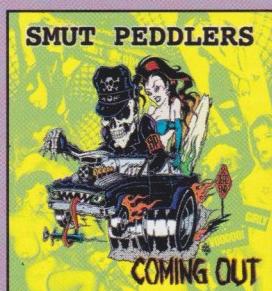
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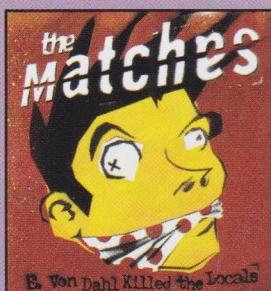
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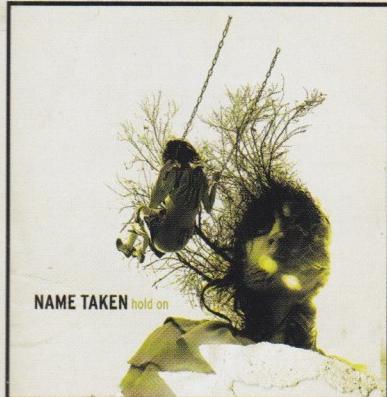


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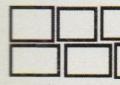
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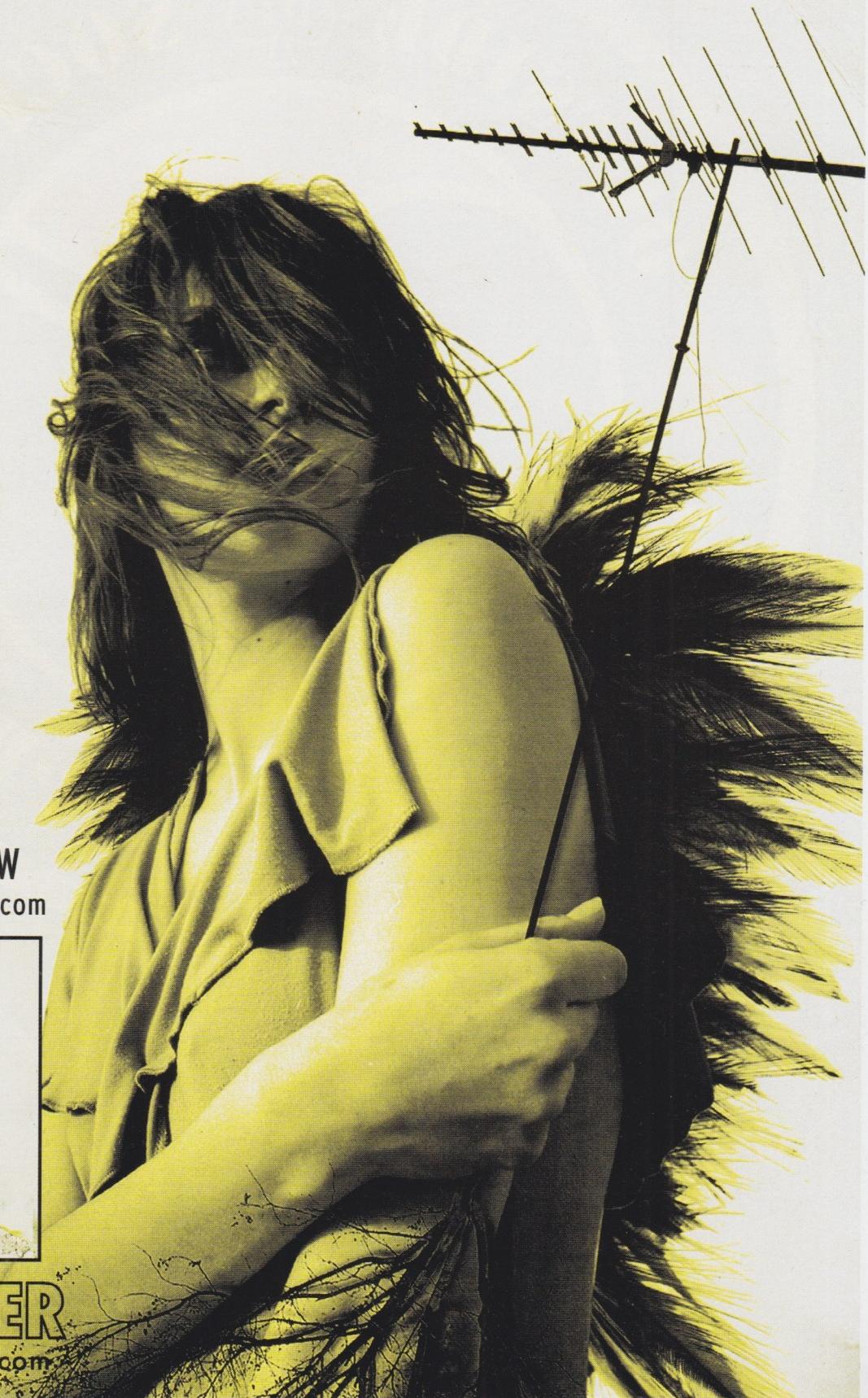
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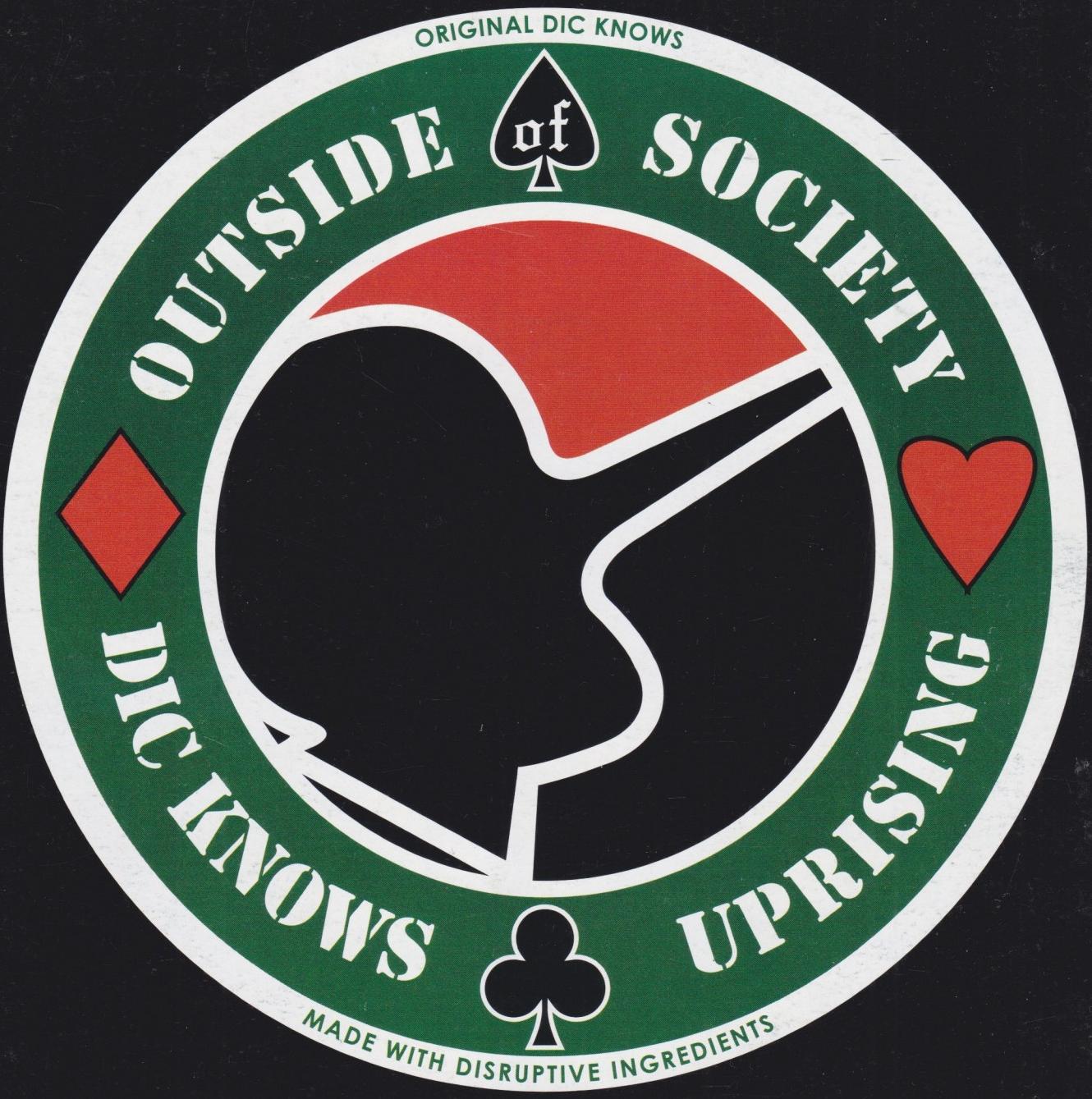
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